United Nations A/61/228

General Assembly

Distr.: General
7 August 2006

Original: English

Sixty-first session
Item 121 of the provisional agenda*
Human resources management

Human resources management reform

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 59/266 of 23 December 2004 and 60/238 of 23 December 2005, on human resources management.

Since the Secretary-General's previous report to the General Assembly on human resources management reform (A/59/263), considerable progress has been achieved in consolidating and expanding the human resources management reform programme, taking into account the resolutions and decisions of the Assembly.

The Secretary-General invites the General Assembly to take note of achievements to date to implement the human resources management reform programme and planned future activities presented in the report.

The General Assembly's attention is also drawn to the report of the Secretary-General on investing in people (A/61/255) pursuant to Assembly resolutions 60/260 of 16 May 2006 and 60/283 of 7 July 2006. That report provides details with regard to proposals 1, 2, 3, 4, 7 and 22 contained in the Secretary-General's report entitled "Investing in the United Nations: for a stronger Organization worldwide" (A/60/692 and Corr.1).

* A/61/150.

06-45950 (E) 210906

Contents

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	Introduction	1–6	3
II.	Background and overview	7–13	3
III.	Role of the Office of Human Resources Management	14–17	6
IV.	Next steps	18–213	7
	A. Human resources planning and monitoring	19–38	7
	B. Streamlined rules and procedures	39–47	11
	C. Recruitment, placement and promotion	48–122	12
	D. Mobility	123–145	26
	E. Competencies and continuous learning	146–164	31
	F. Performance management	165–175	35
	G. Career development	176–191	37
	H. Conditions of service	192–205	40
	I. Contractual arrangements	206–212	43
	J. Administration of justice	213	44
V.	Conclusion	214–216	45
Annex			
	Permanent resident status		46

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 59/266 of 23 December 2004, by which the Secretary-General was requested to report to the Assembly at its sixty-first session on the results of the implementation of the resolution, and to resolution 60/238 of 23 December 2005.

2. The report provides an overview of actions taken further to earlier reform initiatives the Secretary-General presented in his reports entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" (A/51/950), "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387 and Corr.1), and "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005), and describes some of the challenges faced in that process.

3. In his most recent report to the General Assembly, entitled "Investing in the United Nations: for a stronger Organization worldwide" (A/60/692 and Corr.1), the Secretary-General put forth a vision for comprehensive management reform, with specific proposals regarding human resources management. Pursuant to resolution 60/260 of 8 May 2006, those proposals are elaborated in a separate report to the General Assembly, on investing in people (A/61/255).

4. To facilitate continuity in the discussion of progress made in the ongoing human resources management initiatives, the present report is presented in the same format as in previous reports on human resources management reform (A/59/263, A/57/293, A/55/253 and Corr.1 and A/53/414), indicating the goals, achievements and future activities under each of the 10 building blocks for reform of human resources management. Responses to additional specific requests of the Assembly in resolutions 59/266 and 60/238 are also included in the report.

5. The present report should be read together with the report of the Secretary-General on investing in people (A/61/255).

6. The Assembly also has before it the reports of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/61/257), which includes addenda on consultants and individual contractors; the employment of retired former staff; and use of gratis personnel for 2004 and 2005.

II. Background and overview

7. The comprehensive human resources management reform programme which was launched by the Secretary-General in 1997 aims to support the creation of a more productive, flexible and results-oriented Organization within a culture of continuous learning, high performance and managerial excellence. It is intended to build the Organization's human resources capacity and strengthen its ability to attract, develop and retain staff of the highest calibre.

8. Human resources management reform is an integral part of the reform of the Organization, the purpose of which is to promote organizational culture change in order to maximize the effectiveness of the United Nations, to advocate and undertake with credibility its larger mission as an agency of progressive change for the nations and people of the world (see A/51/950).

9. The Secretary-General has repeatedly underscored the importance of staff to the success of the Organization in meeting its changing, complex and inter-related mandates. He has stated that the quality of the United Nations staff determines the success of the Organization, since it cannot succeed unless it attracts and retains the right people to carry out the increasingly complex mandates entrusted to it (see A/60/692 and Corr.1).

10. He has reiterated his commitment to fostering excellence in the workforce so that staff might do their best for the Organization and the United Nations, in turn, might offer its staff careers that are enriching and rewarding. The aspirations of the United Nations Millennium Declaration can only be achieved if the United Nations has a world-class staff equal to the challenges of the new global era (see A/57/387 and Corr.1).

11. The Secretary-General's vision for human resources management reform recognizes the need for a paradigm shift to a new culture of empowerment, responsibility, accountability and continuous learning, as well as the importance of strategic change in underlying attitudes and behaviour with regard to human resources management, in order to ensure successful implementation of the reform measures (see A/53/414).

12. The reform programme has benefited from the guidance of Member States through the General Assembly and extensive consultations and communication with staff and managers throughout the Organization. Significant progress has been made in bringing about the changes envisioned in the integrated reform programme based on 10 key building blocks: human resources planning; streamlined rules and procedures; recruitment, placement and promotion; mobility; competencies and continuous learning; performance management; career development; conditions of service; contractual arrangements; and administration of justice. The past two years have been a period of consolidation, implementation, improvement and expansion of the elements of the building blocks and enhancement of information technology support tools. During that period, greater attention was also given to reviewing, and where possible, addressing the needs of offices and staff in the field. Follow-up activities were also carried out on those actions set forth in the Secretary-General's report on an agenda for further change that fall within the human resources management reform programme. They include action 25 (a), on conditions of service in the field; action 27, on expanding opportunities for General Service staff and action 33, on HIV/AIDS.

13. Major achievements to date include the following:

(a) **A system of human resources planning that provides the Organization with workforce profiles and trends at the Secretariat and departmental levels.** Departmental human resources planning exercises introduced in 1999, currently in its fourth cycle, institutionalized regular discussions between the Office of Human Resources Management and heads of department on major elements of human resources management, thus fostering recognition that managing people is a key part of their responsibilities. Biennial targets for key human resources management areas, such as vacancy management, geographical representation, gender and performance management, are established during the discussion. Departmental human resources action plans have been enhanced, among other things, to include two new management elements. The Management Performance Board oversees the performance of heads of department in the

implementation of departmental plans. Human resources management, together with programme and financial management, is included in the annual programme management plans that heads of department establish with the Secretary-General, thus reinforcing the responsibility and accountability of senior managers for the authority delegated to them. Monitoring of delegated authority in human resources management has been strengthened further with on-site monitoring of departments, offices and field missions;

(b) **Streamlining of policies and rules and electronic *Human Resources Handbook*.** All administrative issuances were reviewed, redundant issuances were eliminated and the remaining documentation was streamlined. The electronic *Handbook*, launched in 2001 and available in English and French, helps to improve access to rules and procedures for both staff and managers and facilitates their understanding of them. Guidelines and task tools in the *Handbook* promote consistency in and uniformity of application of the rules and procedures. It is one of the most popular sites on the Intranet;

(c) **Staff selection system.** A new staff selection system, integrating recruitment, placement, managed mobility and promotion, was introduced in 2002. An important feature was the delegation of the responsibility for selection decisions to heads of department who are responsible for programme delivery. Together with its supporting electronic tool, Galaxy e-staffing, the system has speeded up the selection process, while at the same time improving the efficiency and transparency of the process. During the reporting period training has been conducted for staff, managers and central review bodies to increase their familiarity with the system and several new features introduced in Galaxy. Applications, numbering 350,000 annually, have been received from nationals of 191 Member States. Pursuant to Assembly resolution 59/266, a comprehensive study has been conducted of the selection system. Proposals are currently before the Assembly to improve the system, taking into account Assembly mandates, operational needs and experience and feedback received;

(d) **Policy on organizational mobility.** The policy was established as an integral part of the staff selection system in order to develop a more versatile, multi-skilled and experienced international civil service. As of 2002 occupancy time limits have been placed on all posts. Mobility has been linked to career development and supporting programmes have been put in place. A phased implementation strategy is in place in order to prepare staff for the first round of managed mobility, which begins in May 2007;

(e) **Competencies and core values.** An organizational competency model containing core values and core and managerial competencies was developed through a participatory process and promulgated in 1999. The model aims to promote shared values and common standards throughout the Secretariat. Core values and competencies have been progressively integrated into all human resources systems, such as recruitment and selection, staff development and performance management;

(f) **Continuous learning.** The Organization's training is based on the principle that building and maintaining the professional and managerial competence of staff is an important priority, and that learning is a critical investment in the Organization's future. The policy has two main components: centrally coordinated programmes delivered across the Secretariat, which are designed to change the

culture of the Organization and promote commitment to core values and build core and managerial competencies; and the delegation to departments and offices of funds for the upgrading of the substantive and technical skills of staff, and for specialized information technology;

(g) **Enhanced performance appraisal system.** A performance appraisal system (PAS) based on best practices and principles endorsed by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) was introduced in 1996. PAS links individual work plans with those of work units and departments, and promotes feedback and communication between staff and supervisors. In 2002 an electronic PAS (e-PAS) was introduced; an updated version will be released later in 2007.

III. Role of the Office of Human Resources Management

14. In the reform process, the role of the Office of Human Resources Management has expanded. While it remains as the central authority in matters relating to human resources, its role has evolved from primarily more traditional functions of staff administration and custodian of regulations and rules to one that is proactive and strategic. It plays a key role as a change agent, introducing and sharing new ideas and good practice in human resources management.

15. The Office of Human Resources Management plays a strategic role in helping the Organization to align its human resources capacity to meet emerging challenges, and in supporting the establishment of new entities. For example, the Office played a key role in setting up entities such as the Department of Safety and Security, the Ethics Office, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Capital Master Plan Office. During the same period, it contributed to the introduction of programmes to enhance integrity and ethical behaviour among staff and managers across the Secretariat, as well as to the development of policies for financial disclosure and protection against retaliation for reporting misconduct.

16. As a substantive expert, the Office of Human Resources Management develops and maintains the human resources management infrastructure through policy and system development, provides advice, monitors performance, and provides administrative services. It also plays an important operational role, in cooperation with the Department of Safety and Security and other departments, in the area of staff security and safety, including in developing policies, enhancing emergency preparedness, and in responding to crises. The Office builds capacity to help managers to manage and staff to function to the best of their ability. It is a staff advocate in matters relating to conditions of service and security, including in such areas as work and life issues, staff development and career opportunities.

17. The Office of Human Resources Management works in close partnership with human resources practitioners and managers throughout the Organization, and in consultation with staff and staff representatives in all duty stations. It consults regularly with other organizations of the common system and represents the Organization at ICSC.

IV. Next steps

18. As in any large-scale change process, particularly in a complex global organization, human resources management reform must be viewed as a process. Major achievements to date have set the stage for the Organization to address significant challenges that remain and the new ones that have emerged. These include further adapting human resources management policies and practices so that they are aligned with operational needs and worldwide standards of good practice, and having the resources and tools necessary to implement and manage change. Specific activities are elaborated in the sections following. Comprehensive proposals for further human resources management reform are presented in the Secretary-General's report on investing in people (A/61/255).

A. Human resources planning and monitoring

1. Goals

19. To establish a medium-term and long-term integrated human resources planning capacity and system that specifies the Organization's objectives at the level of individual departments and offices.

2. Achievements to date

20. The Office of Human Resources Management monitors the main demographic characteristics of Secretariat staff and reports on them annually to the General Assembly. In 1999, it introduced a departmental human resources planning system in order to improve departmental planning and performance with respect to legislative mandates in human resources management.

21. The departmental human resources planning system is based on biennial action plans, which are compacts between the heads of the participating department/offices and the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management. The plans, an important element of the organizational accountability framework, are also reflected in the programme management plans between heads of departments and the Secretary-General.

22. The human resources action plans include organizational human resources management goals based on the relevant mandates of the General Assembly. The action plans constitute the management framework to guide programme managers in their human resources management activities during the biennium. Departmental progress is monitored by the Office of Human Resources Management, which provides departments with the required information, guidance and assistance.

23. In its resolution 59/266, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to improve the effectiveness of human resources action plans for achieving the human resources objectives of the Organization. In response, and in cooperation with departments and offices, an expanded action plan was introduced for the fourth planning cycle (2005-2006). The action plans are organized in 10 key human resources management areas: vacancy management, geographical distribution, gender, mobility, revitalization of the Organization, performance appraisal, staff development, staff-management relations and welfare, employment of consultants and contractors, and employment of retirees. Progress in

meeting organizational goals is now measured through accountability targets in the above-mentioned areas.

24. During the current planning cycle, two new departments (Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and Department of Safety and Security) joined the human resources action plan system bringing the total number of participating departments and offices to 28. Human resources action plan focal points have been established in all departments. Progress in the achievement of the action plan goals is evaluated by measuring the progress made towards achieving targets and indicators established for those goals. Action plan performance scorecards facilitate strategic monitoring by the departments and the Office of Human Resources Management. An online system which will improve the monitoring of the implementation of departmental plans is expected to become operational shortly. The Office provides assistance to participating departments and offices in data gathering, analysis and interpretation, as well as support, when required, in reaching the action plan goals.

25. In its resolution 59/266, the Assembly stressed the need for adequate mechanisms to be in place to ensure the accountability of programme managers for the achievement of objectives contained in action plans and requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the reconstituted Accountability Panel had the authority necessary to hold programme managers accountable for their performance in achieving the objectives contained in the human resources action plans. The Secretary-General, through the promulgation of his bulletin of 13 May 2005 (ST/SGB/2005/13), replaced the Accountability Panel with the Management Performance Board. The Board will advise the Secretary-General on matters concerning the performance of individual senior managers. Its functions include monitoring the manner in which senior managers exercise all aspects of the authority that has been delegated to them, including their performance in achieving the objectives contained in human resources action plans.

26. A review of progress in achieving the planning goals during the first year of the current cycle has been completed in cooperation with participating departments and offices, and departmental scorecards have been submitted to the Management Performance Board. At its meeting in July 2006, the Board noted that although certain departments had made good progress in attaining the goals, overall performance continued to fall short of the targets, especially in the areas of geographical representation and gender balance. The Deputy Secretary-General as Chair of the Board has written to all heads of department to remind them of their accountability in meeting human resources management targets.

27. To further enhance the Secretariat's human resources planning capacity, the human resources planning system will be introduced to peacekeeping operations in 2007, in cooperation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. In addition, an online exit questionnaire for separating staff has been developed to capture important information for workforce planning.

28. Monitoring the manner in which departments, offices and field missions exercise the authority delegated to them in the management of human resources continues to be strengthened. The aim of human resources monitoring activities is to ensure that established standards, norms and specifications are respected; delegated authority is exercised in an appropriate manner; regulations, rules, policies and

procedures are adhered to; performance targets are met; support and guidance is given where required; and best practices are vetted, developed and promoted.

29. Since the introduction of monitoring visits in 2002, the Office of Human Resources Management organized such visits to 17 peacekeeping operations and 17 departments and offices. During 2005-2006, monitoring visits were conducted to four field operations (including one follow-up mission), five offices away from Headquarters and one office at Headquarters. Feedback on their performance as well as recommendations and assistance to address shortcomings were provided to the entities visited.

30. Through close cooperation with departments, offices and field missions, standard monitoring terms of reference and standard operating procedures for monitoring visits have been introduced. Methods for on-going operational monitoring of various functional areas of human resources management were improved, allowing for closer partnership with departments, more proactive verification of compliance with established policies and practices, and faster remedial actions, when necessary. Monitoring will be further enhanced with the introduction of an online tool, which is under development, for recording of recommendations of on-site monitoring and follow-up actions.

3. Post structure

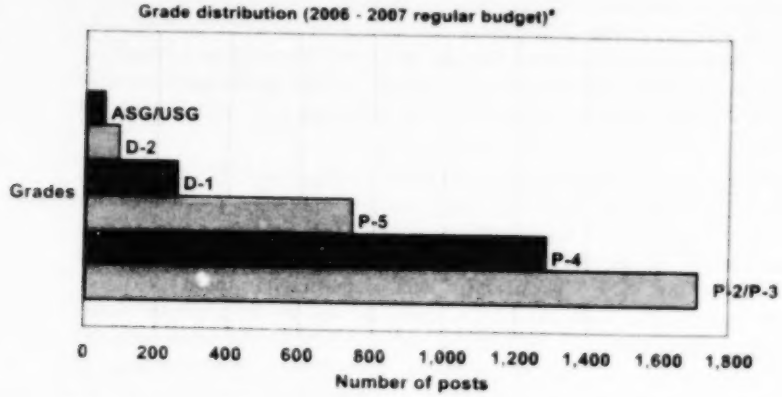
31. In the context of workforce planning, the General Assembly, in resolution 59/266, requested the Secretary-General to make proposals to the General Assembly, as appropriate, to reform the post structure with a view to considering a possible increase in the proportion of P-2 and P-3 posts, taking advantage of the opportunity provided by the retirement of many senior staff in the coming years.

32. At the request of the General Assembly, the Secretariat had conducted a comprehensive review of the post structure of the United Nations Secretariat, the results of which were reported to the Assembly in the Secretary-General's report (A/57/483). The review found that there was no single measure or a generally accepted grade distribution that would provide a template for an assessment of the grade structure. In addition, it found that there were no general theories of organizational design of practical application that could be relevant to the United Nations, bearing in mind its broad mandate and policymaking focus.

33. The review concluded that, from the point of both internal and external comparators, the existing post structure and distribution of posts in the Secretariat did not indicate any apparent anomalies that could be characterized as top-heaviness of the Secretariat structure vis-à-vis comparative post structures in other major international organizations. That conclusion was corroborated and confirmed in a subsequent report (A/58/398). That report also noted that the grade distribution of posts in the Professional and higher categories, particularly in the higher echelon, has remained stable since the biennium 1998-1999.

34. It is noted that the combined share of the P-2 and P-3 posts in the grade pyramid under the current regular budget, as shown in the table below, can be considered as within the limits of the practices of organizational design indicated in the reports mentioned above (A/57/483 and A/58/398). In 2006, that proportion was 41.3 per cent of all posts in the Professional and higher categories. The proportions

for other grades are: P-4, 31 per cent; P-5, 18 per cent; D-1, 6.2 per cent; D-2, 2.2 per cent; and Assistant Secretary-General/Under-Secretary-General, 1.2 per cent.



* *Source*: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 (A/60/6/Add.1, table 5).

35. With respect to expected attrition, 609 staff members serving in the Professional and higher categories under the regular budget are expected to retire between 2006 and 2010. Of the total, 141 will be P-2/P-3 staff members (10.7 per cent of the total at those levels), 178 P-4 (18.4 per cent), 169 P-5 (29.1 per cent), and 121 D-1/D-2 (37.8 per cent).

36. In view of the fact that the current grade distribution in the Professional and higher categories has been considered normal, it would not appear necessary to change the grade structure at this time. The current proportion of posts would seem appropriate considering the increasingly complex mandates of the Organization. The Secretary-General is not proposing any change to the existing post structure. The issue could be revisited should there be changes in the Organization's work programme.

4. Future activities

37. The current human resource planning system needs to be further developed to enable the Organization to carry out a strategic global workforce planning, a critical underpinning for the Secretary-General's reform proposals elaborated in his report on investing in people (A/61/255). Strategic workforce planning will be based on systematic analyses of supply and demand requirements, gap analyses, and elaborating solutions to address the gaps between today's workforce and future needs.

38. Further improvements to the human resources action plan system will be undertaken with a view to making it more user-friendly and responsive to the needs of departments and increasing responsibility and accountability of programme managers for achieving the mandated goals. At the same time, the capacity for human resources planning would be further strengthened through better data-gathering systems, more flexible support tools and ongoing training of departmental focal points.

B. Streamlined rules and procedures

1. Goals

39. To eliminate obsolete and redundant rules and procedures; to streamline documentation relating to current rules; to allow easier access through electronic means; and to provide the means for consistent and uniform application.

2. Achievements to date

40. In order to achieve these goals, a review was conducted of all administrative documents contained in the *Personnel Manual*. All redundant Secretary-General's bulletins, administrative instructions, information circulars and personnel directives were eliminated, and the remaining documentation was streamlined.

41. In 2001, the electronic *Human Resources Handbook* was launched and made accessible both on the Intranet and on the Internet. It is now available in both French and English. The *Handbook* provides to all users, including staff, managers and human resources practitioners, immediate access to the up-to-date text of the Staff Regulations and Rules, and to all administrative issuances and circulars relevant to human resources management. The *Handbook* offers useful features, such as guidelines, templates and sample correspondence designed to assist human resources practitioners. Between 2002 and 2006, a number of guidelines on the application of rules and procedures were developed and posted on the electronic *Handbook* to facilitate understanding of new and/or complex issues and uniformity of interpretation throughout the Secretariat.

42. Since its inception, the *Handbook* has been one of the sites most frequently accessed on the Intranet, with over 3.4 million "hits" in 2005. This clearly demonstrates the usefulness of this tool and supports the Secretary-General's vision of an integrated Secretariat emphasizing accountability of managers and practitioners in the application of the policies and rules in force as well as transparency of the decision-making process. Additionally, the *Handbook* and its features assist human resources practitioners in the consistent and uniform application of policies and rules.

43. The *Handbook* is updated on a regular basis to ensure that its contents accurately reflect the contents of all applicable Staff Regulations, Rules and administrative issuances. In 2001 it received the UN 21 Award.[1]

44. In addition to the *Handbook*, the Office of Human Resources Management maintains on the Intranet a separate site giving online access to all new Secretary-General's bulletins, administrative instructions and information circulars, including those that are not related to human resources. The Office also maintains on the Intranet a site offering an online database of current official United Nations forms (e.g., for procurement, accounts, personnel, travel, etc.) for use by staff and administrators. This site has also been frequently accessed, with over 315,000 hits in 2005. The widespread use of these electronic tools, in addition to the *Handbook*, ensures transparency and consistency in the application of rules and policies and

[1] The UN 21 Awards were established as part of the reform effort by the Secretary-General in 1996 to provide recognition to staff members for innovation, efficiency and excellence in the delivery of the Organization's programmes and services.

supports accountability as an integral element of the overall organizational culture of empowerment of managers and staff.

3. Future activities

45. The streamlining of human resources rules and procedures will continue through regular and frequent updates of the contents of the English and French versions of the electronic *Human Resources Handbook* and the Intranet reference collection; further development and posting of guidelines, templates and sample correspondence for human resources practitioners; work on the simplification and streamlining of the substantive aspects of the Staff Regulations and Rules, based on work being done at the common system level in respect of common system entitlements.

46. It is also proposed to implement the recommendation made by the Office of Internal Oversight Services in its audit of the documents reproduction and distribution function to disseminate Secretary-General's bulletins, administrative instructions and information circulars electronically rather than continuing the present system of printing and distributing these documents in hard copies. According to the Office of Internal Oversight Services, approximately 600,000 copies were printed and distributed in 2003 alone. Experience shows that hard copies are frequently distributed with considerable delays, and do not reach all those concerned, especially in field offices.

47. Drawing on the experience acquired from the generalized use of electronic dissemination of important documents, such as monthly salary statements, the practices of other United Nations organizations and after consulting the staff representative bodies, the United Nations funds and programmes and the Office of Legal Affairs, the Office of Human Resources Management intends to proceed with the electronic dissemination of all administrative issuances. This will streamline the dissemination process and improve speed, transparency as well as access to information of vital importance to the proper administration of the Organization. As requested by the users, the necessary safeguards will be put into place beforehand to ensure that staff and managers are informed of the issuance of new documents and are given the broadest possible access.

C. Recruitment, placement and promotion

1. Goals

48. To develop a more versatile, multi-skilled, mobile and experienced international civil service; to select staff on the basis of merit, demonstrated competencies and performance; to ensure that selection decisions are made by managers on the basis of objective, job-related criteria; to provide more career opportunities for staff; to introduce a more transparent, speedier process for filling vacancies; and to achieve equitable geographical distribution and gender parity.

2. Achievements to date

49. A new staff selection system, integrating recruitment, selection, promotion and managed mobility of staff, was implemented in May 2002, following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 55/258. The system introduced several new features,

including delegation of authority for selecting staff to heads of department, who are responsible for programme delivery; establishment of central review bodies, an important monitoring and accountability mechanism; rostering of qualified shortlisted candidates for similar posts; use of generic job profiles; and the introduction of competency-based interviews as part of the evaluation of candidates. The responsibilities of staff/applicant, programme manager, head of department, and the Office of Human Resources Management, executive offices and local personnel offices in the selection system are spelled out.

50. The new system was the outcome of extensive consultations with staff and management throughout the Secretariat as well as with staff representatives in the Staff-Management Coordination Committee. Among its main goals were: (a) to change the culture of the Organization by further empowering staff and managers to discharge their responsibilities and holding them accountable for their actions and their results; (b) to develop a more versatile, multi-skilled and experienced international civil service, based on the predicted needs of the Organization; (c) to select staff on the basis of merit, demonstrated competencies and performance, through a competitive process where the paramount consideration is the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, with due regard to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible and to the gender distribution goals set by the General Assembly; (d) to ensure that selection decisions made by the heads of departments/offices are based on objective, job-related criteria, following confirmation by the new central review bodies of compliance with the relevant procedures; and (e) to make recruitment and placement procedures more transparent and timely.

51. To support the development of a versatile, multi-skilled and mobile workforce, the staff selection system requires that staff members move laterally to different functions as a prerequisite to promotion to the P-5 level. Transparency, consistency and objectivity are upheld through the work of central review bodies, which ensure that evaluation criteria are objective and related to the functions of the post and reflect relevant competencies, that candidates are evaluated on the basis of pre-approved evaluation criteria, and that the applicable procedures are followed.

52. In an effort to promote a better understanding of job expectations, increased transparency and consistency, the system also introduced the use of generic job profiles. These provide standard job descriptions that encompass a large group of related jobs with similar duties and responsibilities, education, work experience and technical skill requirements, and essential core competencies. The online availability of the generic job profiles provides managers with easily accessible standard descriptions of job characteristics and requirements.

53. A recently implemented feature of the staff selection system was the use of rosters. Candidates who have been endorsed by a central review body for a particular vacancy but not selected for it, and who have indicated an interest in being considered for selection for a future vacancy with similar functions at the same level, are placed on the rosters. The policies governing the staff selection system provides for the selection of roster candidates without further review by a central review body to improve the timeliness of filling vacancies.

54. Efforts continued during the reporting period to improve understanding and familiarity of staff, managers and members of central review bodies with the staff selection system. For example, training programmes have been organized on a

regular basis, and various guidelines have been prepared on different aspects of the selection process, and are available online in the *Human Resources Handbook*.

55. The introduction of the staff selection system was accompanied by a global web-based tool, Galaxy e-staffing. In its resolution 57/305, the General Assembly welcomed the introduction of Galaxy, and requested the Secretary-General to ensure that it would enhance transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of the recruitment process of the United Nations system. Galaxy has improved access of potential applicants worldwide. The average number of applications has risen from approximately 50,000 per year before Galaxy to a current high of about 350,000 annually. Applications have been received from 191 Member States. Applications received by e-mail or in hard copy are entered into Galaxy in order to ensure that they are considered for the particular vacancy announcement. The option to write a cover letter when applying in Galaxy was implemented in 2005, enabling applicants to better present their candidacy. This new feature, pursuant to a recommendation of the OIOS (see A/59/253), has proved to be a useful part of a screening system, for which a functionality was introduced in Galaxy in 2004. The Office of Human Resources Management ensures that screening of candidates is based on the main requirements of a job as reflected in its vacancy announcement. To assist programme managers with the review of roster candidates, a roster management module was introduced in 2005.

56. Galaxy has helped to streamline work processes associated with the filling of vacancies and provided managers with the facility to prepare vacancy announcements, access to applicant information and to record candidate evaluation. The time taken to fill vacancies has been significantly reduced from 275 days under the previous system to 174 days (ibid.).

57. The Secretary-General continues to place great importance on multilingualism. Galaxy is available worldwide in both English and French. Vacancy announcements indicate that English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. The vacancy announcements for posts in the Professional and above categories, personal history profiles, instructions and frequently asked questions about the staff selection system are available in both French and English. The United Nations website provides information on recruitment policies and procedures in all six official languages of the Organization. Many posts in the Organization, in particular those in the Professional and higher categories, require knowledge of more than one official language of the Secretariat, and this is so indicated in the vacancy announcements. In addition to knowledge of one or more of the official languages, knowledge of the local language is advantageous in certain countries where the United Nations operates.

58. The Office of Human Resources Management supports the recruitment of staff for language posts by conducting examinations in all six official languages of the United Nations. Annual meetings are held with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management to evaluate their recruitment needs and a calendar of examinations is prepared accordingly. Examinations to fill language positions are thus held on a regular basis according to the needs of the Organization.

59. The implementation of the staff selection system and its information technology tool has not been without major challenges. The surge in the number of applications received has placed an added burden on programme managers and administrators. Staff have also expressed concern that the system does not have the

required degree of transparency and that there are insufficient mechanisms to hold managers accountable. Managers and staff alike find the policies governing the system complex and hard to understand. Galaxy needs to be much more user-friendly and integrated with other human resources systems, such as e-PAS.

3. Review of the staff selection system

60. In resolution 59/266, the General Assembly noted the proposal of the Secretary-General, based on the recommendation of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (ibid.) to reduce the time required for advertising a vacancy from 60 to 45 days, and decided to revert to that issue in the context of a comprehensive study addressing all factors contributing to the process of selection, recruitment and placement, at its sixty-first session. It also requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to reduce the period required to fill vacancies by addressing all factors contributing to delays in the process of selection, recruitment and placement and to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session.

61. In implementing that mandate, the Secretary-General took into account recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, feedback on the Secretary-General's reform proposals received through outreach activities to staff, agreements reached at the twenty-seventh session of the Staff-Management Coordination Committee in June 2006 and internal reviews conducted by the Office of Human Resources Management.

62. In addition, the Office of Human Resources Management sent a questionnaire to staff who performed different roles in the staff selection system (administrators of the system, programme case officers and members of central review bodies). The questionnaire elicited 669 replies from the 1,576 staff members contacted. A benchmarking exercise was also carried out involving 22 United Nations funds and programmes, agencies, development banks and intergovernmental organizations. The institutions provided information concerning their staffing policies and practices, as well as technologies and resources used to implement them.

4. Findings of the review

63. The review conducted pursuant to resolution 59/266 addressed the following three main factors that contribute to the process of selection, recruitment and placement: policies and procedures, the major steps in the implementation process, and the information technology support tool, Galaxy e-staffing. The findings are summarized below.

(a) Policies and procedures

64. The policies and procedures of the staff selection system were promulgated in 2002 in the Secretary-General's bulletins ST/SGB/2002/5 and ST/SGB/2002/6, and administrative instruction ST/AI/2002/4. In the course of the past four years, a number of guidelines have been issued and training sessions conducted to assist heads of departments, programme case officers, members of central review bodies and human resources officers in carrying out their functions under the system. These guidelines have been disseminated widely and placed online in the *Human Resources Handbook*.

65. While these efforts have been well received by users, feedback and experience gained over the past four years indicated the need for further simplification and streamlining of policies and procedures. Simplification would make the policies and procedures easier to understand, enhance consistency in their application and help to speed up the process.

66. The need for simplification is also underscored by the responses to the questionnaire, where only 40 per cent of respondents indicated that the policies and procedures are easy to understand. Some 50 per cent, however, said that the roles of the major players in the staff selection system were clear. Programme managers surveyed had a less favourable view of the policies and processes than other users of the system, such as members of the central review bodies and human resources officers. Concern with timeliness was borne out by the review: less than 20 per cent of the respondents to the questionnaire indicated that the policies and procedures facilitate speedy recruitment. Programme managers indicated that there were too many stages in the process and that requirements for the evaluation of candidates were too complex, factors which contributed to the time taken to complete a case. About half of the respondents found that policies and procedures promote selection decisions based on objective job-related criteria and that they allow for a competitive process. About 40 per cent indicated that they help to promote selection decisions based on merit.

67. In considering the role of policies in contributing to the time taken to fill vacancies, it is clear that streamlining is required. It should be noted that the current complexity of the Organization's policies and procedures is in part due to the broader range of obligatory requirements that the Secretariat has to comply with compared to the institutions which participated in the benchmarking exercise.

(b) Major steps in the implementation process

Preparation of vacancy announcement, approval of evaluation criteria and posting of vacancy announcement

68. The process for the posting of a vacancy announcement requires the initiation of a case in Galaxy by the executive or administrative office, the drafting of the vacancy announcement and evaluation criteria by the programme manager, review and endorsement of the evaluation criteria by a central review body, translation of the vacancy announcement and posting of the vacancy announcement by a human resources officer.

69. For posts at the P-3 to D-1 levels, the average time taken from the creation of vacancy announcements to their posting in Galaxy is 45 days. Several built-in factors should have helped to speed up the process, including the use of generic job profiles or of vacancy announcements and evaluation criteria that have been pre-approved by a central review body. Pre-approved announcements and evaluation criteria could be used without further review by a central review body. A number of countervailing factors delayed the process, however. For example, lack of familiarity among programme officers with policies and procedures necessitated consultation as well as a prolonged review process in central review bodies. Another factor is the time necessary for translation.

70. All vacancy announcements for international recruitment in the Professional category and above are posted on Galaxy in English and French. Most vacancy

announcements need to be translated. While the number of days required for translation depended on the workload in conference servicing departments, in New York the average time for this part of the process is 11 days. The allocation of dedicated resources to translation would significantly speed up the process.

71. As required by the General Assembly, all vacancy announcements in the Professional and higher categories are posted for 60 days. In contrast, the average advertising time of organizations which participated in the benchmarking exercise was 28.5 days. The shorter time for advertising, coupled with a narrower range of obligatory requirements, enabled those organizations to fill an externally advertised vacancy in 137 days, rather less than the Secretariat's 174 days. This indicates that the selection process could be sped up from a reduction in the required number of days for posting a vacancy.

Screening of candidates for eligibility, evaluation for suitability, review by central review body and selection

72. There is significant variation in the time spent on this phase, which involves screening of candidates by human resources officers to ensure that they are eligible for consideration; evaluation of candidates by programme managers, including competency-based interviews; review by a central review body; and selection of a candidate by the head of department. Typically, the average time for this process is 86 days, with some cases taking more than 150 days.

73. Delays have been caused, in part, by the increase in the volume of applications following the introduction of Galaxy, and the absence of commensurate features in the information technology tool to handle the increase. In addition, the staff selection system is hampered by excessively complex eligibility requirements that are governed by numerous factors. The eligibility requirements included the staff member's time in post, contractual status, source of funding of the post, level, category, length of contract or limitations of service to a particular office, and whether the staff member has geographical status. The application of eligibility requirements has proven to be administratively time-consuming, and difficult for staff and managers to understand. Improved information technology tools and the elimination of some of the complex internal eligibility requirements will speed up the process and promote greater equity among staff.

74. The time taken by the programme case officers to evaluate, interview and present written recommendations account for much of the variation in time spent on this phase. Another factor is the time required by central review bodies for their review. If the central review body finds that the process has been followed, then it moves quickly to the next phase, while cases in which concerns are raised can be subject to time-consuming communication between the central review body and the department/office. For example, in New York, during the period 1 January 2004 to 30 June 2006, about 45 per cent of cases were returned to managers for further review. A main reason for the returns was to ensure that evaluations of candidates followed the competency-based approach.

75. In this regard, to further enhance the capacity of managers to select candidates on merit, it was confirmed at the twenty-seventh session of the Staff-Management Coordination Committee that competency-based interviews would be mandatory for all positions and all interview panel members would be required to complete training in competency-based interviewing.

Functioning of the central review bodies

76. An important feature introduced in the new staff selection system is a joint staff-management mechanism — central review bodies. As previously indicated, central review bodies ensure that evaluation criteria are objective and related to the functions of the post and reflect relevant competencies, that candidates are evaluated on the basis of pre-approved evaluation criteria, and that the applicable procedures are followed. In addition, in reviewing the proposal made by the department/office for filling a vacancy, the central review bodies consider whether the proposal is reasoned and objectively justifiable based on the pre-approved evaluation criteria. The proposal must be accompanied by a certification that, in making the proposal, the head of department/office has taken into account the Organization's human resources planning objectives, especially with regard to geography and gender balance. They also consider whether the record indicates the existence of a mistake of fact, a mistake of law or procedure, prejudice or improper motive that could have prevented a full and fair consideration of the requisite qualifications and experience of the candidates.

77. In the performance of their function as a monitoring and accountability mechanism of the system, the central review bodies globally held 1,353 meetings to review submissions of evaluation criteria and recommendations for filling a vacancy during the period 2004-2005. From those reviews, 2,126 candidates were selected for advertised vacancies and another 2,252 were placed on roster, after the central review bodies were satisfied that the applicable process has been observed. The central review bodies in New York alone reviewed evaluation criteria for 1,558 cases and sought explanation and clarification from programme managers on about half of them.

78. Most central review body members who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the review of cases by central review bodies was valuable. Nevertheless, about 60 per cent of the respondents were of the view that improvements could be made in the review of evaluation criteria and more than 50 per cent felt that improvements could be made in the review of recommendations. They also indicated that programme managers needed more training in writing vacancy announcements and evaluation criteria and in how to evaluate candidates. Improvements in these areas would help to speed up the review process.

79. The General Assembly, in its resolution 59/266, also requested the Secretary-General to make every effort to ensure that the central review bodies discharge fully and effectively their role in the staff selection system, as foreseen in annex II to the report of the Secretary-General, on human resources management reform (A/55/253 and Corr.1), and to make proposals to amend the terms of reference of the central review bodies as necessary in the light of experience.

80. Annex II to the Secretary-General's report (ibid.) discussed, among other things, the concept of ranking of candidates against agreed selection criteria. However, the ranking of candidates for endorsement by the central review bodies would dilute the principle that the head of department is accountable for the selection decision and for ensuring that policies on geography and gender are taken into consideration in making the selection decision. After extensive discussions between staff and management representatives, it was agreed at the twenty-seventh session of the Staff-Management Coordination Committee that, when

recommending a candidate for selection by the head of department, programme managers would be required to substantiate their recommendations in writing.

81. In view of the above, no substantive change is required for the terms of reference of central review bodies. To facilitate the work of the central review bodies and to speed up the review process, however, training will continue to be provided to programme managers as well as to members of the central review bodies to enable them to carry out their functions effectively and in a timely manner. Further information technology enhancements will be required to enable central review bodies to improve their functioning, for example by being able to conduct virtual meetings.

Establishment, maintenance and use of roster

82. Candidates who have been endorsed by a central review body for a particular vacancy but not selected for it, and who have indicated an interest in being considered for selection for a future vacancy with similar functions at the same level, are placed on rosters. Those candidates remain on the roster for one year. Within that period, the candidate may be selected for similar vacancies without further reference to a central review body. While candidates were placed on the roster from the inception of the system, technical difficulties prevented the activation of an online feature in Galaxy until 2005. The implementation of the roster management module in Galaxy has facilitated review of roster candidates by programme managers, although further technological refinements are required.

Selection decision and taking up of functions

83. The authority to select candidates was delegated to heads of department under the new staff selection system. After the selection decision has been made, several administrative requirements must be performed for the recruitment of external candidates, including background checks with employers, referees, and academic institutions to ensure that the information provided is accurate. Medical clearance must also be obtained. An offer of appointment is issued and a letter of appointment is signed, based on satisfactory reference checking and medical suitability. Travel and shipping arrangements must also be made for the new staff member and entitled dependants. Staff selected for positions are normally required to move within two months. The time taken for a selected candidate to assume the new functions may take over three months in the case of recruitment of external candidates.

84. This step is currently managed outside Galaxy. Respondents suggested that time could be saved by doing background checks as soon as the shortlist of candidates was known, rather than after a candidate was selected. They also suggested that better information technology tools would enable more timely and efficient completion of background checks, and that providing lump-sum options for travel and shipping would save time and effort.

(c) Support tool: Galaxy e-staffing

85. The introduction of the staff selection system was accompanied by the introduction of an information technology support tool, Galaxy e-staffing. Galaxy has made the circulation of vacancies more transparent and application process more accessible. Candidates from 191 Member States have submitted applications

through Galaxy. The increase in number of applications, however, has placed a burden on programme managers and administrators.

86. More than 70 per cent of the respondents stated that Galaxy is available when they need it, and close to 60 per cent reported that Galaxy provides the information needed for their role in the system. Used initially to announce vacancies for posts to be filled under the 100 series of the staff rules, it now is used for vacancies under the 200 and 300 series as well.

87. Galaxy has replaced a paper-based system. Respondents gave very low ratings to its ability to speed up recruitment, however, as it does not have features to handle effectively the large volume of applications received. For example, the screening feature and the roster management module need enhancement. User-friendliness also received a low rating; some users find it laborious and access to it slow. Concerns were also expressed at the insufficient integration of the tool with other systems, such as e-PAS.

5. Conclusions drawn from the review

88. The review of factors contributing to the process of selection, recruitment and placement shows that an average of 45 days are needed to prepare for the posting of a vacancy announcement; 60 days for advertising of vacancy announcements; and 86 days for evaluation of candidates, review by a central review body and selection by the head of department.

89. Several reasons contribute to the time taken for the process. They include the following: (i) complexity of the policies, including eligibility requirements governing the system. Managers and staff alike find the policies governing the system complex and hard to understand; (ii) the large number of applications received, about 350,000 a year. The surge in the number of applications received has placed an added burden on programme managers, administrators and the information technology system; (iii) an information technology system that does not have features to handle effectively the large volume of applications, that is not sufficiently integrated with other human resources systems, and that is not user-friendly; and (iv) lack of familiarity of programme managers with the policies, procedures and information technology system, pointing to the need for further training, as well as for clear, less complex policies.

90. Recruitment formalities for external candidates, however, require background checks, including with educational institutions, previous employers and referees, as well as administrative clearance. These requirements, essential for the protection of the Organization, currently delay the placement of a selected candidate and could be undertaken earlier in the process. Some administrative processes could be automated.

91. In view of the above, the Secretary-General is making proposals to the General Assembly for a speedier and more proactive system of recruitment and staffing in his report on investing in people (A/61/255).

6. Geographical representation and gender balance

(a) Equitable geographical distribution

92. Among all staff holding appointments of one year or more, a limited number of staff of the Secretariat are recruited under the system of desirable ranges. Posts allocated to this system are considered subject to geographical distribution. Member States are grouped into four categories: unrepresented, underrepresented, within range and overrepresented. A Member State is considered "unrepresented" when none of its nationals is serving in a post subject to geographical distribution having gone through the established selection process. It is "underrepresented" when the number of its nationals appointed to such posts is below the lower limit of the desirable range. It is "within range" when the number of its nationals appointed to such posts is between the upper and lower limits of the desirable range; and it is "overrepresented" when the number of its nationals appointed to such posts exceeds the upper limit of the desirable range.

93. Relevant statistical information is provided to the General Assembly annually in the reports of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat. In its latest resolution dealing with this subject (resolution 59/266), the General Assembly noted with appreciation the progress made since 1994 in reducing the number of countries that are unrepresented and underrepresented. It welcomed the continuing efforts of the Secretary-General to improve the situation of unrepresented and underrepresented Member States and of those in danger of becoming underrepresented under the system of desirable ranges. It requested him to continue his ongoing efforts to attain equitable geographical distribution in the Secretariat and to ensure as wide a geographical distribution of staff as possible in all main departments and offices. The Assembly further expressed concern over the decline in the proportion of nationals of developing countries in posts at the senior and policymaking levels of the Secretariat.

94. Equitable geographical distribution continues to be a priority issue for the Secretary-General, and is addressed in a variety of ways. Among them is the human resources action plans. Heads of departments and offices undertake to increase the number of recruitments of candidates from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States on posts subject to geographical distribution; and to monitor the share of developing countries, countries with economies in transition and developed countries in the Secretariat's geographical composition at the Professional and higher categories. The Management Performance Board monitors the performance of each department and office in the implementation of the human resources action plans (see the section on human resources planning and monitoring in paras. 19-38 above).

95. Another mechanism is the staff selection system. Heads of department and office are required to certify that they have taken into account the Organization's human resources objectives and targets as reflected in the departmental human resources action plans, especially with regard to geography. No case will be considered by the central review bodies unless such certification has been made in Galaxy, a feature that serves to remind heads of department that they are accountable for the improvement of the geographical representation of staff in their departments and/or offices. In order to assist departments further, the Galaxy e-staffing system has been enhanced to include a special feature that highlights

candidates from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States. The system also offers a search function to help managers to identify candidates by nationality.

96. Partnership between the Office of Human Resources Management and unrepresented and underrepresented Member States is essential to increase the pool of qualified candidates from those countries. Periodic meetings are held with representatives from those Member States to inform them of measures taken to recruit nationals from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States, to learn about their concerns and to identify areas of collaboration. In addition, a small number of recruitment missions have been organized.

97. The task of improving geographical representation requires the focused attention of unrepresented and underrepresented Member States and the Secretariat. Those Member States have identified focal points; similarly, the Office of Human Resources Management has also designated a focal point who is fully dedicated to working with departments and Member States on representation issues.

98. A "fast-track" pilot project was proposed by the Secretary-General in his report on improvement of equitable geographical representation in the United Nations Secretariat (A/59/264), as a new measure to assist in reducing the level of underrepresentation of Member States and the number of unrepresented Member States. In response, the General Assembly, in its resolution 59/266, authorized the Secretary-General, for a trial period of two years during which the procedures would be fully developed, to establish a special roster of candidates from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States for a number of posts at the P-4 and P-5 levels only, until such Member States are within the desirable ranges, and requested the Secretary-General to report thereon to the Assembly at its sixty-first session.

99. After preparatory consultations with unrepresented and underrepresented Member States, the Office of Human Resources Management launched a fast-track pilot project in May 2006 in partnership with departments and concerned Member States. Eleven anticipated vacancies at the P-4 and P-5 levels were identified for inclusion in the pilot project. Special vacancy announcements for those vacancies were transmitted to the permanent missions of unrepresented and underrepresented Member States. Participating Member States publicized those vacancies and sought qualified candidates. A total of 319 applications were received from nine Member States. They have been evaluated and a roster will be established after a review by a central review body. External candidates from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States who have applied for vacancies not included in the pilot project and who have been endorsed by a central review body will be included in the fast-track roster.

100. Another important means of addressing geographical representation is the national competitive examination. The national competitive examination is offered annually to Member States that are unrepresented, underrepresented or in danger of falling below their desirable range. Staff recruited through the examination are given geographical status. More information on the national competitive examination is provided below.

101. The General Assembly, in section I, paragraph 5, of its resolution 60/238, noted that, owing to projected retirements, some Member States may become unrepresented and underrepresented during the period 2005-2009, and requested the

Secretary-General to urgently take steps to address that matter. The Secretary-General is addressing the matter in a variety of ways. These include more focused workforce planning, inclusion of Member States in danger of becoming unrepresented or underrepresented in national competitive examinations, and reminders to managers to advertise posts six months prior to anticipated retirements.

102. The levels of representation have remained constant over the last five years, with the majority (74 per cent) of Member States consistently within range. The representation status of Member States is affected by many factors, notably turnover and recruitment of staff, changes in the scale of assessments, and changes in the total number of Member States. Over the period 2002-2006, the geographical representation of Member States as at 30 June of each year was as follows:

Level of representation of Member States	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*2006*[a]
Unrepresented	16	17	15	17	18
Underrepresented	11	10	10	9	11
Within range	142	145	145	145	141
Overrepresented	20	19	21	20	21

[a] This does not reflect the membership of the Republic of Montenegro, which joined the Organization on 28 June 2006.

103. Further details on geographical representation is provided in the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/61/257).

(b) Gender balance

104. In resolutions 57/305 and 59/266, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to increase his efforts to attain and monitor the goal of gender parity in the Secretariat, in particular at senior levels, and in that context to ensure that women, especially those from developing countries and countries with economies in transition, are appropriately represented within the Secretariat.

105. The Secretary-General remains fully committed to the attainment of gender parity in the Secretariat. During the reporting period, the accountability of heads of departments for the achievement of the gender targets included in the human resources action plans has been strengthened with the establishment of the Management Performance Board. Among other things, the Board monitors the manner in which senior managers exercise all aspects of the authority that has been delegated to them, including their performance in achieving the objectives contained in human resources action plans (see paras. 19-38 above, on human resources planning and monitoring).

106. Gender targets are formal indicators in the human resources action plans established jointly by the Office of Human Resources Management and departments and offices in the Secretariat. Heads of department are required to certify that they have taken into account the gender target set in their human resources action plans when making selection decisions. Special attention is paid to those departments and offices with inadequate representation of women in the Professional and higher categories. The action plans also provide a framework for the departmental gender focal points to contribute to the improvement of gender balance in the departments

concerned. For the current human resources planning cycle, gender targets have been further refined. A new target introduced in this cycle seeks to bring to the attention of heads of department to the number of women staff from developed countries, from developing countries and from countries with economies in transition. A feature in Galaxy highlights to managers gender and representation status of the country of the applicants.

107. National competitive examinations conducted annually are a means of recruiting from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States and also figure as an important way towards achieving gender balance in the Secretariat. During the period 2001-2005, 56.5 per cent of recruitments from the national competitive examination roster were of female candidates.

108. Despite these efforts, the level of female representation in the Secretariat at the Professional and higher levels is lagging behind the parity target. During the last five years, the level of representation grew from 34.9 per cent as at 30 June 2002, to 37.4 per cent as of the same date in 2006. Measures to accelerate the attainment of gender balance are proposed in the Secretary-General's report on investing in people.

109. Information on the status of gender representation in the Secretariat is provided in the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat.

7. Recruitment of P-2 and P-3 posts

110. The General Assembly, in its resolution 60/238, section I, paragraph 7, requested the Secretary-General to provide to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session an assessment of recruitment to P-2 and P-3 posts, including the effect of the national competitive examinations and, if relevant, recommendations on how to improve that method of recruitment.

111. Recruitment to most P-2 regular budget non-language positions is through the national competitive examination. A limited number of recruitments take place through the G to P examination for staff members in the General Service and related category. National competitive examinations are offered annually to all Member States that are unrepresented, underrepresented or are in danger of becoming unrepresented. In the period 2001-2005, 366 staff members were recruited from the roster of national competitive examination candidates, at an average rate of 73 per year. For the 2005 national competitive examination, 14,113 candidates from 58 Member States applied; 3,515 were convoked and 221 were successful. As at 30 June 2006, there were 521 candidates on the national competitive examination roster, 285 (54.7 per cent) female and 236 (45.3 per cent) male.

112. Experience has shown that candidates are most often selected within the first two years after the year they were placed on the roster. Candidates are not taken off the roster unless they have indicated their non-availability, they refused offers of employment with the United Nations, or they can no longer be traced. A large number remain on the roster for several years. The Office of Human Resources Management periodically requests roster candidates to update their profiles. In forwarding national competitive examination candidates to managers for selection, their particular attention is drawn to candidates from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States.

113. Despite efforts made to increase the number of recruitments from the national competitive examination roster, the average number of candidates selected for employment remains constant. Accordingly, the Office of Human Resources Management will centrally manage the placement of successful national competitive examination candidates to ensure that they are recruited more expeditiously.

114. The G to P examination was first used in 1979 to enable staff in the General Service and related categories to move to the Professional category through a competitive, transparent and fair process. The examination has now been fully aligned with the national competitive examination.

115. Until 1999, 30 per cent of P-2 posts were reserved for the G to P examination every year. In 2000 the General Assembly decided in resolution 55/258 to reduce the number of posts to 10 per cent of appointments at that level. Subsequently, the Secretary-General proposed in his report on human resources management reform (A/59/263), that the percentage of P-2 posts available for successful candidates be raised to 25 per cent and a roster system be introduced to allow high-scoring, but unplaced, candidates to apply for posts not subject to geographical distribution. In resolution 59/266, the Assembly maintained the level of 10 per cent, and also decided that each year up to three successful G to P candidates could be placed in P-2 posts in duty stations with chronically high vacancy rates and up to seven candidates could be placed on non-geographical P-2 posts.

116. Pursuant to resolution 59/266, the profiles of 12 rostered G to P candidates have been released by the Office of Human Resources Management to departments and offices throughout the Secretariat. At the time of writing, three candidates had been selected from the roster for P-2 posts in duty stations with chronically high vacancy rates: two were selected by the Economic Commission for Africa and one by the United Nations Office at Nairobi. One candidate has been selected for a non-geographical post at the P-2 level.

117. The Secretary-General remains very concerned with the limited possibility for staff members in the General Service and related categories to be appointed to the Professional category and is making a proposal in this regard in his report on investing in people.

118. The General Assembly, in section III, paragraph 6, of resolution 59/266, requested the Secretary-General to apply strictly the relevant administrative instruction for recruitment at the P-3 level and to report thereon to the Assembly at its sixty-first session.

119. The rules governing the selection of candidates for P-3 posts, as mandated by the General Assembly, ensure that consideration is given to the career development and promotion opportunities for staff members at the P-2 level who have been recruited on the basis of a competitive examination. The rules set out in section 7.2 of administrative instruction ST/AI/2002/4 require that all internal candidates at the P-3 level applying for a lateral move and those at the P-2 level applying for a promotion must be fully considered. Should there be no suitable internal candidate for the post, a review must be conducted of successful candidates in a national competitive examination at the P-3 level. External candidates may be considered only if no internal or national competitive examination candidate is available.

120. The rules are enforced through various mechanisms. When transmitting cases to programme managers, the Office of Human Resources Management informs them

of the applicable rules and the need to review internal candidates before making a recommendation to select external applicants for P-3 posts. The central review committees ensure that no external candidates are included in the list of recommended candidates if there are suitable internal candidates. Furthermore, the Office of Human Resources Management ensures that national competitive examination candidates are reviewed before external candidates by providing programme managers profiles of candidates on the national competitive examination roster who have at least five years of relevant experience. Selection of external candidates for P-3 posts may be made only when the central review committee is satisfied that there are no suitable internal candidates, and that no suitable national competitive examination candidates have been identified.

121. During the period 2004-2005, 40.2 per cent of vacant P-3 posts were filled through promotions and 5.7 per cent through lateral moves. The remaining 54.1 per cent were filled through recruitment when the central review committees were satisfied that there were no suitable internal candidates.

8. Future activities

122. Building on the improvements of previous reforms and the experience gained since the introduction of the system in 2002, as well as taking into account recommendations of the Staff-Management Coordination Committee at its twenty-seventh session, reviews undertaken and feedback received, further adjustments to the recruitment and staffing process are required to keep pace with the operational demands placed on the Organization. Reforms are also needed to make the process more transparent and promote greater equity among staff. Significant improvements are required in human resources information technology systems. In this connection, the Secretary-General is presenting proposals to the General Assembly in his report on investing in people.

D. Mobility

1. Goals

123. To provide the Organization with the means to move people within and among functions, departments, occupational groups, duty stations and organizations of the United Nations system in order to meet its operational requirements; to develop multi-skilled staff able to operate in a multidisciplinary environment; to develop a more integrated approach to the many facets of the Organization's work; to promote better understanding and knowledge at Headquarters of the Organization's work in the field, and vice versa; and to provide staff with more varied career opportunities.

2. Achievements to date

124. An organizational mobility policy came into effect on 1 May 2002 as an integral part of the staff selection system and applies to all staff from the G-5 to D-2 levels. Four principles support this policy: mobility is required to meet the Organization's operational needs and priorities; mobility is a shared responsibility; mobility is integral to career development; and mobility patterns of staff will vary.

125. Prior to the introduction of the mobility policy, the management of staff mobility had remained passive, with movement of staff taking place on an ad hoc

and voluntary basis. The new policy introduced a managed approach to meet organizational needs in which mobility was viewed in its broadest sense, that is, movement across functions, departments, occupational groups, duty stations and organizations of the United Nations system. The overall goal was to stimulate mobility as an essential part of career service. In so doing, the Organization would ensure that posts are filled with experienced and skilled staff, wherever they may be located.

126. As of 1 May 2002, post occupancy limits were established for all posts with a maximum of five years for posts up to the P-5 level, except for P-2 staff who are subject to special rules, or six years for posts above P-5. The policy established a clear linkage between mobility and career development, namely, two lateral moves at the professional level are required as a pre-condition for consideration for promotion to the P-5 level as of 1 May 2007. The policy also includes incentives to encourage movement to duty stations with high vacancy rates, by allowing staff who have served in Nairobi or a regional commission other than the Economic Commission for Europe to have more rapid career growth. The lateral move requirement is reduced to one lateral move after serving in one of these duty stations.

(a) Programmes and initiatives to support mobility

127. Since 2000, P-2 staff have been required, as part of their contractual obligations, to participate in a mandatory managed mobility programme. Three mandatory managed reassignment exercises have been conducted for P-2s since 2002, in addition to six voluntary reassignment exercises. A fourth mandatory managed reassignment exercise is currently under way and expected to be finalized very shortly.

128. As a result, 196 P-2 staff moved within the first five years of their service. Of these, approximately one half were promoted and the others moved laterally within or across departments, duty stations and occupational groups. Almost 50 per cent of the P-2s required to participate had already successfully moved on their own prior to the managed reassignment exercise. Another 40 per cent were moved through managed reassignment, with 10 per cent requesting deferrals for one year for various reasons, including for operational needs, such as the ability to complete a budget cycle, or for compelling personal circumstances.

129. Extensive training programmes continued to be offered and delivered globally to support the Secretary-General's reform objective to build a multi-skilled, versatile and mobile international civil service. Career development workshops have been made available to staff and managers addressing career planning, identifying transferable skills and competencies, analysing vacancy announcements, preparing applications, completing personal history profiles, creating resumes and cover letters and conducting and/or participating in interviews. In 2004-2005, almost 2,000 staff participated in one-day career development workshops offered at Headquarters and offices away from Headquarters.

130. Career resource centres similar to that established in New York were opened in most major duty stations. The purpose of these centres is to assist staff and managers in planning and preparing for career development, an essential part of which is mobility. Resources offered include books, videos for self-study, articles,

websites, small group mini-workshops, and practice sessions, as well as workshops and individual counselling (over 2,400 users to date in New York alone).

131. The information obtained through e-PAS which includes a career development goal, a learning goal, and expression of interest in mission assignment has been a valuable resource in assisting managers and staff in planning career moves, and providing data to the Organization to facilitate succession planning and training needs assessments.

132. Generic job profiles covering the majority of Professional posts and General Service posts (G-5 and above) continue to be available online, thus facilitating a better understanding of job expectations, increasing transparency and consistency. Generic job profiles provide standard job descriptions that encompass a large group of related jobs with similar duties and responsibilities, education, work experience and technical skill requirements, and essential core competencies. These profiles support the principle of mobility and multi-skilling, as they ensure that staff can be selected for various posts in the same occupational group.

133. The purpose of these programmes and initiatives is to encourage staff to identify career moves and become more proactive without waiting until the end of their post occupancy period. In that respect, it may be noted that, since the introduction of the mobility policy as an integral part of the staff selection system in 2002, the mobility index for departments participating in human resource action plans rose from 10.8 per cent in 2002 to 15.3 per cent in 2004.

(b) Progressive implementation of the mobility policy

134. A detailed strategy has been developed for the progressive implementation of the mobility policy. Three phases of the strategy have been completed or are nearing completion.

Phase 1: 2002-2004 (completed): introducing the concept of mobility, on the basis of staff-management consultations and intergovernmental review; promoting culture change; putting in place programmes and mechanisms to prepare and support staff;

Phase 2: 2004-2005 (completed): refining the strategic plan for the implementation of managed mobility; developing the necessary policy and information technology infrastructure; increasing awareness and understanding and developing networks to support mobility;

Phase 3: 2005-2006: (ongoing): refining the necessary policy and information technology infrastructure; ongoing communications and awareness-building.

Implementation of managed mobility for staff other than P-2s will take place in a phased manner beginning in May 2007.

(c) Knowledge management: preserving institutional memory

135. In order that increased mobility will not adversely affect institutional capacity, the Secretariat is actively supporting and developing knowledge management practices. Such practices are important not only for maintaining continuity, quality of service and institutional memory in the context of the implementation of the mobility policy, but also because of anticipated high rates of retirement in the coming years. Many departments have launched knowledge management initiatives,

including cross-training staff and rotating them through different assignments in order to spread the knowledge base and share institutional memory more widely. Managers are responsible for putting in place systems which would support mobility, including introducing standard operating procedures to facilitate knowledge management and the preservation of institutional memory, and undertaking succession planning and cross-training to ensure that the institutional capacity to deliver is preserved.

136. Several knowledge management initiatives in the Organization and throughout the United Nations system have the potential to facilitate a more systematic and strategic approach to knowledge sharing in the Organization. For example, the Secretariat Task Force on Knowledge Sharing, led by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, is developing a Secretariat knowledge-sharing agenda. The United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) Task Force on Knowledge Sharing will be working on a knowledge-sharing strategy for the United Nations system. A pilot knowledge-sharing project of the United Nations Development Group combines four organizational knowledge-sharing models around the topic of HIV/AIDS.

137. Ongoing information technology initiatives have the potential to strengthen technological capacity for knowledge sharing. For example, the Department of Management is developing an electronic content management platform that will incorporate e-management, knowledge sharing and services to intergovernmental bodies. The knowledge management component will establish common platforms for sharing knowledge and address how information is delivered. In the context of CEB, a system-wide information and communications technology strategy is being developed as part of an overall effort to strengthen capacity to manage knowledge in the system in order to maximize the support provided to countries in using information and communication technology for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

138. The mobility awareness campaign includes information on knowledge management techniques and best practices. The Office of Human Resources Management is working closely with the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, which has been assigned the lead for knowledge management in the Secretariat. The Knowledge Sharing Section incorporates an Internal Communications Unit tasked with identifying more effective methods to communicate within the Secretariat and developing a strategy to ensure a systematic approach to the issue. For example, the Unit redesigned iSeek in August 2005 to become a worldwide United Nations Intranet that connects staff with management, shares consistent messages, posts up-to-date information and connects staff with work tools.

139. There are several other noteworthy initiatives that tap into staff interest in sharing knowledge. For example, the knowledge management tool kit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations incorporates a methodology as well as reporting and dissemination protocols for after-action reviews, end-of-assignment reports, handover notes and practice surveys (incorporating both good and bad practices as well as lessons learned). The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific has endorsed knowledge management as an organizational initiative to help it to attain its three-pronged objective of managing globalization, reducing poverty and addressing emerging social issues. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) mission roster provides information about all

recent UN-Habitat missions and can be searched by various criteria, including staff member and mission country. ReliefWeb, a web-based information system for humanitarian response administered by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs aims to strengthen the response capacity of the international humanitarian community through the rapid dissemination of reliable information on emergencies and disasters.

(d) Addressing work and life issues

140. As mobility is defined in the broadest sense, that is, within and among departments, functions, occupational groups, duty stations, and organizations of the system, the single most important obstacle to mobility relates to the difficulties faced by dual-career families. To address the issues that spouses face in looking for employment at a different duty station, the Spouse Support Programme was established in 2004. In an effort to meet this need, a spousal database was created to enable spouses of staff members to become acquainted and establish networks. Spouse support networks have been developed at many duty stations. Focal points for spouse employment have been established at all major duty stations.

141. In addition, the Office of Human Resources Management introduced semi-annual job search workshops. The intended purpose of these workshops is to assist spouses of staff members in finding employment, managing interviews in both a United Nations and non-United Nations context, and developing an information network. To date five workshops have been conducted with 80 spouses participating.

142. A Mission Readiness Programme was established to address the complex needs of staff members who are being recruited and assigned to different peacekeeping missions or duty stations throughout the world. The Programme aims at developing adequate coping skills necessary for a smooth transition into their new working and living environment. It includes a pre-deployment briefing, ongoing support to staff members and their families during the mission assignment and assistance in work, social reintegration and family reunion upon the staff member's repatriation.

143. The Secretariat continues to be a member of Partnerjob.com, an association of companies and organizations with mobile employees which provides a database for resumes and job openings to help find jobs for employees' spouses and partners. Similarly, the Secretariat has renewed its membership with the Permits Foundation, an association of international companies working together to encourage Governments to relax work permit regulations in order to assist with expatriate spouse employment.

3. Future activities

144. The implementation of a systematic mobility policy in the Secretariat requires significant organizational culture change. In this regard, the future activities will include keeping staff well informed and prepared:

(a) Starting in May 2007, managed mobility will be implemented level-by-level in a gradual and phased manner in order to maintain continuity and quality of service as follows: P-3 and G-7, May 2007 to October 2007; P-4 and G-6, November 2007 to April 2008; P-5 and G-5, May 2008 to October 2008; and D-1 and D-2, November 2008;

(b) Continued mobility information campaign, Secretariat-wide, which began in May 2005, provides information to all staff on the mobility policy, its implications for them and available support mechanisms;

(c) Ongoing mobility and career support workshops and information sessions for staff at all levels at all duty stations;

(d) Career counselling available through career resource centres at all duty stations;

(e) Enhanced training opportunities to prepare staff to take up new assignments;

(f) Continuing work will be done to improve the quality of human resources data which will be critical in determining post occupancy deadlines and providing managers with timely and accurate data;

(g) Human resources information technology systems will need to be enhanced in order to support the managed reassignment programmes.

145. Finally, as explained in the annex to the present report, there is a long-standing policy that requires staff members to renounce permanent resident status in a country other than the country of their nationality after recruitment. It also severely restricts the acquisition or retention of such a status after recruitment. This policy creates a significant obstacle to mobility in respect of staff who previously met the strict conditions for an exemption from the policy and would no longer meet those conditions after a move. The policy also contributes to instability for families when family members have to leave a duty station after a staff member has moved to a field mission or a non-family duty station. Should the General Assembly decide to change the policy, the Secretariat would ensure that the revised policy is promptly implemented and reflected in the mobility programme.

E. Competencies and continuous learning

1. Goals

146. To define and validate the core organizational values and competencies required of all staff, as well as managerial competencies; to promote shared values and common standards and build organizational capacity; to integrate the competencies into all human resources systems; and to develop a culture of continuous learning.

2. Achievements to date

147. United Nations core values and core and managerial competencies were defined in 1999 using a participatory process that involved a cross-section of staff at all levels throughout the Organization, including the Deputy Secretary-General, all heads of department and office and several hundred staff in six duty stations. During that process "commitment to continuous learning" was identified as one of the key competencies needed by all staff in the United Nations, then and into the future. Core values and core and managerial competencies have been integrated progressively into all human resources systems, as illustrated below.

148. In the staff selection system, competencies are included in all generic job profiles and are a key component of the evaluation and selection criteria for all posts. Programmes to familiarize both managers and staff with competency-based interviewing techniques have been widely attended; a condensed one-day programme has been developed specifically for senior managers. A post-programme refresher course for all participants is available online or through a CD-ROM version. It was confirmed at the twenty-seventh session of the Staff-Management Coordination Committee that competency-based interviews would be mandatory for all positions and all interview panel members would be required to complete training in competency-based interviewing.

149. Regarding performance management, competencies are an integral part of e-PAS. Each staff member is evaluated on respect for core values and key competencies for his or her job. At least one development activity must be identified by each staff member for each e-PAS cycle, and the final record documents whether that activity, as well as any other developmental activities, was performed. Effective performance management is integrated into all supervisory, management and leadership programmes, and a specific training programme for managers has also been developed.

150. The training and learning policy is based on the principle that staff development is an important priority, as it represents a critical investment in the Organization's future. In implementing this policy, a wide range of developmental and learning opportunities are made available to staff at all levels. Staff development programmes are geared towards supporting the Secretary-General's reform programme by contributing to organizational culture change and building current and future human resources capacity. Programmes are structured around the defined organizational core values, and core and managerial competencies which provides a competency framework for all developmental activities.

151. The staff development policy includes centrally organized programmes to build organizational capacity and support management reform, and decentralized programmes whereby resources for the upgrading of specific substantive and technical skills are allocated directly to individual departments and offices on the basis of annual needs assessments.

152. Centrally organized programmes have been aligned with the competency model. New programmes have been developed to build and maintain core values and core and managerial competencies, as well as to meet emerging organizational needs. These are determined through ongoing needs assessment that identifies gaps where skills and competencies need to be developed or strengthened, or where special discrete programmes need to be put in place. These programmes are offered to staff throughout the Secretariat in the following areas: orientation; leadership, management, supervisory and organizational development; career support and development; gender and diversity; conflict management and mediation; human and financial resources management; competency-based selection and interviewing; staff welfare; information technology; and language and communications. Increased use of online training and distance learning is making training available to larger numbers of staff across the Secretariat.

153. To promote core values of integrity, professionalism and respect for diversity, mandatory ethics sessions have been introduced, as well as mandatory online training on integrity awareness. Ethics has also been integrated into many existing

and new programmes, and the Office of Human Resources Management collaborates closely with the Ethics Office in identifying needs and developing appropriate materials. At the inter-agency level, a mandatory online training programme on the prevention of harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority in the workplace has been launched in collaboration with a number of other organizations in the United Nations system.

154. In partnership with individual departments and offices, customized training on gender issues is offered. This focuses on examining the department's substantive work and processes with a view to assessing the gender-related implications of any planned action, policy or programme, highlighting and developing best practice, and preparing a departmental action plan to ensure an inclusive, gender-sensitive environment and to drive constructive change. An expanded library of self-study online courses offering more than 5,000 topics is now offered via the Internet, providing learning opportunities at home, in the office, or anywhere staff have Internet access. Orientation programmes for new staff joining the United Nations in New York have been increased, and are available to all staff within the first few months following recruitment.

155. Language courses in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish are offered to promote multilingualism within the Secretariat and improve the language capabilities of its staff, who work in a multicultural and multilingual environment. The purpose of these courses is to provide staff members with the opportunity to achieve proficiency in other official languages and develop greater respect for diversity. Courses are organized for beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels. In addition, specialized workshops are offered in specific work-related areas, such as presentation skills, languages through media, report writing, e-correspondence, and cultural and linguistic diversity. A dedicated website provides staff members with online language learning support tools which received the UN 21 Award in 2005. In addition, language proficiency examinations are administered globally by Headquarters.

156. A number of new programmes have been offered to develop managerial competencies at all levels. Programmes to build supervisory, managerial and leadership capacity have been strengthened and made mandatory for targeted groups of staff. New programmes have been introduced for staff at the D-1/D-2 levels, and for middle level managers at the P-4/P-5 levels. A women in leadership development programme has been introduced. Special programmes for junior Professional staff have been developed, and the supervisory skills development programme for senior General Service staff with supervisory responsibility has been strengthened. Established programmes, such as information technology, upgrading of technical and substantive skills, language and communications, gender and diversity, human and financial resources management, are regularly updated to reflect new policy and to take advantage of new technologies.

157. A wide variety of organizational development tools has been developed, including publication of the booklets *Profile of an Effective Manager* and *Profile of an Effective Department*. An online all staff survey is now available. The 360-degree assessment tool has been revised to provide a benchmark for effectiveness at the individual, team and departmental levels. Complementing leadership and management development programmes for individual managers, the Office of Human Resources Management offers department-based organizational

development programmes and interventions which are customized to meet the specific needs of each office following administration and analysis of various assessment and diagnostic tools. Follow-up activities include short-duration training in targeted competency areas, team-building exercises, process reviews, coaching for teams and/or for individual managers.

158. Expanded staff development programmes have been developed for General Service staff. A series of workshops focusing on communication, interpersonal skills, team-building and client service are offered. Greater emphasis has been given to team-based programmes to maximize the impact of training at the work-unit level, and to complement individual development programmes and related activities. Staff are also invited to participate in many other programmes such as collaborative negotiation skills, project management, information technology and language and communications programmes.

159. Evaluation is an integral part of all developmental activities both to ensure that programmes meet priority organizational needs and to measure impact. In addition to internal monitoring and assessment, periodic independent external evaluations of staff development programmes are conducted.

160. In the context of the overall organizational learning policy, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has developed an integrated training strategy and evaluation framework to ensure improved coordination in all aspects of training in field missions, including training activities for civilian, military and police personnel serving in United Nations peace operations. The new strategy and framework aims at promoting greater linkages among the different components, while ensuring that the specific needs for all mission personnel are met. The training strategy will also streamline the identification of and the provision for the expanding areas of cross-cutting training needs, for example, leadership and management in the mission environment, conduct and discipline, gender equality, and HIV/AIDS, and will enhance synergies through the sharing of resources and facilities.

161. In the context of the policy on senior leadership appointments in United Nations peace operations, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has introduced an initiative known as the Senior Leadership Induction Programme, whereby the newly appointed senior leaders of field missions will be required to undertake mandatory induction training and development within the first six months of their appointment, as a condition of their service. This programme is intended to familiarize selected senior officials with the functioning of peace operations, as well as to assist them in acquiring critical knowledge and an understanding of their wider United Nations accountabilities in terms of programme, human resources and financial management.

162. At the inter-agency level, the United Nations continues to work with the United Nations System Staff College to develop its core curriculum, focusing on programmes that cut across organizational lines and help to create a common management culture throughout the system. A leadership development programme for senior managers of the system is under development. The Resident Coordinator System and the Early Warning and Preventive Measures training programmes continue to successfully cut across traditional lines of organizational responsibility, support reform efforts and strengthen partnerships. Inter-agency Communities of Learning Practice exist at most duty stations, and a strong global network of

Learning Managers has been formed, meeting annually at a Learning Managers' Forum organized by the Staff College. Learning policies, programmes and approaches are discussed, encouraging collaboration and greater harmonization, as well as reducing duplication of effort and costs in developing programmes which are of mutual interest and benefit to the United Nations and its funds and programmes.

3. Future activities

163. Staff development is key to the success of all reforms. Sustained efforts and increased investment are required to build and maintain the professional competence of staff. The importance of leadership, management and organizational development initiatives will be given increased recognition. The Women in Leadership programme will be expanded to include a programme for emerging women leaders at the middle management level. Training in the use of alternative learning methods such as mentoring and individual coaching will be provided in the context of these programmes. The orientation process for newly appointed senior officials will be strengthened for staff members at the Assistant Secretary-General/Under-Secretary-General levels.

164. The Office of Human Resources Management will continue to partner with other departments and offices in developing appropriate learning programmes and briefings in the areas of administration of justice, investigation, and technical skills training in substantive administrative areas such as budget and finance, and human resources management. The development of ethics programmes and briefings for staff at all levels in the context of orientation and induction programmes, leadership, management and organizational development programmes, as well as mainstreaming ethics into all staff development programmes, will continue in collaboration with the Ethics Office.

F. Performance management

1. Goals

165. To promote an equitable, transparent and measurable system of performance management for all staff members throughout the Secretariat in support of a results-based culture that recognizes and rewards excellent performance and adequately addresses underperformance, to optimize performance at all levels of the Organization, enhancing responsibility and accountability.

2. Achievements to date

166. In 1996, the Secretariat adopted a performance appraisal system (PAS) to help move towards a performance-oriented culture. The performance appraisal system reflects the goal of the General Assembly to establish a transparent and effective system of responsibility and accountability (General Assembly resolution 48/218 A of 23 December 1993). The system has been revised a number of times in the light of experience and feedback received. The latest revision introduced a new electronic performance appraisal system (e-PAS), which was made available online. The most notable improvements over the previous system are the inclusion of competencies, career aspirations and multiple perspectives as well as an emphasis on linking individual workplans with those of work units and departments.

167. As a flexible tool, e-PAS records the workplan and other goals agreed upon by the staff member and the immediate supervisor. It reduces paperwork associated with the performance process, ensures widespread access to performance management tools and provides a standardized, structured approach to collecting and storing performance data. The system incorporates United Nations core values and competencies to provide a fuller picture of performance. It provides for self-assessment by the staff member and the staff member's assessment of supervision received, and strengthens the links between performance management and career development. Both the staff member and the supervisor sign off and dates are recorded so that timely completion of the workplan, mid-point review and end-of-cycle appraisal can be monitored. E-PAS is the first United Nations application that is delivered over the Internet and available to the global Secretariat. This system received the UN 21 Award in 2003.

168. The system applies to all staff members who hold appointments of at least one year under the 100 Series of the Staff Rules, except for staff at the level of Assistant Secretary-General and above, who report directly to the Secretary-General. Staff under the 200 and 300 series and temporary staff employed for less than one year under the 100 series may be appraised under PAS subject to the nature and duration of their functions and the supervisory structure in place in the work unit. A fourth cycle using the e-PAS was completed in 2005-2006 and a fifth cycle was launched as of April 2006.

169. The Office of Human Resources Management, in its advisory and monitoring capacity, has assisted departments and offices in reinforcing the concepts and implementing the process. It has also monitored implementation across the Secretariat to assist managers and staff members and helped to ensure fair and consistent application of the system. An e-PAS help desk has been operating since 2003 to solve problems that individual staff may experience and to obtain feedback on the performance management process.

Staff development programmes and initiatives to support performance management

170. A wide range of development programmes has been put in place for staff at all levels aimed at supporting the implementation of effective principles of performance management and building the required skills, such as leadership development, supervisory skills, effective communication, coaching for improved performance, team building and appraising staff. Monitoring of e-PAS compliance and rating trends indicates that overall organizational compliance has been maintained at 80 per cent Secretariat-wide for the past two cycles. Differentiation of performance has improved notably over the past six years, with 50 per cent of the staff rated as fully meeting expectations and around 10 per cent receiving the highest rating.

171. A major focus since the introduction of PAS has been performance management training programmes for managers and supervisors, taking into account their central role in implementing the system and establishing the intended performance culture throughout the Secretariat. In 2006, an enhanced performance management training for managers and supervisors was launched. An important component of the programme was to train managers on setting specific and measurable goals and providing effective feedback.

172. A learning programme has been made available to field missions. That initiative has contributed to greater consistency in performance management across the Secretariat. In a number of duty stations, problems with connectivity and bandwidth continue to hinder full access to e-PAS, however.

3. Future activities

173. The process of institutionalizing a culture of performance management is a long-term endeavour that requires significant organizational culture change and continuous learning. The Office of Human Resources Management will continue to support managers and staff in implementing the performance management system with a view to promoting a culture of high performance and continuous learning.

174. An updated version of e-PAS will be released in 2007, including a new reporting system. That system will give senior managers access to accurate and timely information on all phases of the PAS process for their departments or offices and will provide them with the ability to monitor e-PAS work flow, compliance, implementation status and rating distribution. In addition, the system will provide information on goals, performance achievements, competencies, staff development and other career information to assist departments with their human resources action plans.

175. The Staff-Management Coordination Committee, at its twenty-seventh session in June 2006, agreed to establish a staff-management working group to review performance management in its entirety, including any feedback mechanisms that may be deemed appropriate.

G. Career development

1. Goals

176. To build and maintain a highly competent, multi-skilled and versatile international civil service capable of meeting the Organization's present and future needs, and in so doing, to meet the development needs and career aspirations of individual staff members.

2. Achievements to date

177. In recognition of the fact that sustained efforts are required to build and maintain the professional competence of staff, and that devoting resources for this purpose is a critical investment in the Organization's future, the approach to training and development has gone from being largely ad hoc and reactive to proactive and integrated. The new approach has allowed development of staff at all levels, including in new leadership, management and organizational development programmes and tools, as well as on e-learning.

178. The career development policy, which emphasizes that career development is a shared responsibility, is based on the principle that responsibility for career growth and development is shared by the Organization, its managers and its staff, with each playing a critical role. The policy requires the Organization to provide a framework of opportunity and the requisite supporting programmes and systems; it requires managers to support staff development and career progress; and it requires staff members to be committed to their continuous professional growth.

179. To date, in an effort to assist staff in identifying career paths and making strategic career choices so as to gain the experience and skills required for their desired career directions, the Office of Human Resources Management increased the number of career development workshops offered on various topics to meet staff needs for effective career and life planning. Career resource centres have been established at most major duty stations in order to support staff on a worldwide basis. In addition to career workshops, and self-study resources, individual career coaching is also offered by career counsellors and Office of Human Resources Management staff. Individual career coaching continues to be one of the most popular offerings of the Career Resource Centre.

180. Starting in 2005, the supervisory programme for General Service staff has been expanded into two modules to be taken within a period of six months to a year of each other. It is complemented by a series of other programmes, which seek to build up effective communication and listening in a culturally diverse environment, and to develop a win-win relationship through influence and managing resistance. Some additional relevant programmes for General Service staff are Effective Communication, and Collaborative Negotiation Skills. In addition, a workshop specially designed for General Service staff to support mobility and career enhancement was introduced in January 2006. This workshop assists them in assessing their skills, values, and preferences, and provides a supportive environment in which participants learn ways to research opportunities to enhance their "marketability" and be mobile.

181. One-day career development workshops continue to be offered on a variety of topics to staff, including career planning, career planning for managers and supervisors, preparing written applications, and effective interviewing. In order to accommodate the work schedules, accelerated half-day career development workshops have been offered in preparing written applications and effective interviewing skills. Two-hour lunchtime mini-workshops continue to be offered and allow staff to explore a variety of career development areas as they prepare for mobility.

182. In support of multilingualism and to promote respect for cultural diversity, language courses are offered in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. Proficiency in working and other official languages is essential to support mobility and to open broader career opportunities for staff. The language courses include regular classes leading to the language proficiency examinations and specialized workshops in specific areas related to the workplace, such as presentation skills, languages through media, report writing, e-correspondence, and cultural and linguistic diversity. A dedicated website provides staff members with online language learning support tools.

183. A key objective of the career development system continues to be to attract, develop and retain young Professional staff of the highest calibre from all parts of the world. All entry-level Professional staff throughout the Secretariat who are successful in competitive examinations are invited to participate in a week-long orientation programme. The programme builds an awareness of the wide range of work carried out by the Organization, and a basic foundation of the knowledge, skills, and global service perspective required for an international civil service career. It focuses on strengthening key skills in communication, collaborative negotiation and self-management and introduces the current developments in human

resources management reform, including the United Nations competency model and managed reassignment programme for junior Professional staff.

184. An essential element of the junior Professional development programme is a mentoring programme which provides strategically focused career support for young Professionals. Each junior Professional is provided during the orientation with a mentor. Mentors are senior staff who have volunteered their time to support junior colleagues, are provided with training and ongoing support by the Office of Human Resources Management to facilitate an understanding of the Organization and complement the initiation and training offered to them by their direct supervisors and managers. This programme includes ongoing career support and follow-up to evaluate progress.

185. In 2004-2005, approximately 170 new junior Professionals attended the orientation programme within the first four to six months of the date of their initial assignment and have been matched with senior staff in mentoring pairs. To date, approximately 430 mentoring pairs have participated in the programme.

3. Future activities

186. Career workshops, self-study resources and counselling will continue to be offered in career resource centres at all major duty stations to assist staff in identifying different potential paths and making strategic career choices to gain the experience and skills required for their desired career direction. In addition, the Office of Human Resources Management will continue to support the career resource centres through train the trainer activities and general guidance.

187. The Office of Human Resources Management will continue to focus on further enhancing systematic development for General Service staff, facilitating General Service mobility across functions and seeking to establish greater opportunities for qualified staff to join the Professional category.

188. To support the mobility policy that will come into effect in May 2007, mobility readiness workshops, which include personal history profile preparation, competency-based interviewing skills, and career and life planning assessments, will continue to be offered. In addition, workshops and tools will be developed to support staff members' work and life balance, especially from a global career mobility perspective. Information sessions on mobility policy and reassignment programmes will continue to be offered.

189. Subject to the increase in resources requested in the Secretary-General's report on investing in people, mandatory P-2 development programmes would be enhanced to ensure broad-based development of junior Professionals in the early years of their careers, with the possibility of expanding to P-3 staff. These programmes would facilitate staff movement and enhance their employability in different parts of the Organization.

190. Similarly, with an increase in resources, a comprehensive system would be developed to map advancement to successive levels of responsibility in the Organization, together with the establishment and enforcement of clear standards. Activities planned for this purpose include instituting mandatory training in key areas for all staff (e.g., ethics), or for staff wishing to work in certain areas (e.g., finance, human resources, budget and finance); offering managed developmental experiences, and assessments, as appropriate, and linked to each stage of a staff

member's career; and requiring evidence of having fulfilled requirements for advancement to jobs at higher levels. Staff would be encouraged to proactively manage their careers by applying for inclusion on rosters of occupational groups for which they meet the qualifications either for a lateral move or promotion.

191. While career paths may take different forms and may not necessarily be predictable in this rapidly changing environment, the development of career models with potential career paths and cross-over points will help staff to move within and across functions and occupations and will support a more systematic cross-functional training and staff mobility. This will require promotion and support of an organizational culture change to encourage and value diverse career paths and to reinforce the importance of mobility and continuous learning as key elements of career success.

H. Conditions of service

1. Goals

192. To provide staff with a better work and life environment and to work with the parties in the common system and ICSC to develop a competitive compensation system that will enable the Organization to attract and retain staff of high calibre.

2. Achievements to date

193. The Secretary-General has indicated on a number of occasions that enhanced conditions of service are the underpinning of his overall programme for human resources management reform. The Office of Human Resources Management continues to work in support of the Secretary-General's agenda, including making detailed proposals towards harmonizing conditions of service. A wide range of initiatives has been put in place to ensure that staff have a better and more secure work and life environment in support of the varied activities of the United Nations.

194. In line with the Secretary-General's agenda for further change (A/57/387 and Corr.1), the Office of Human Resources Management led a comprehensive inter-agency review of the contractual arrangements and benefits offered to Secretariat staff in field locations with a view to harmonizing them, to the extent possible, with those of the United Nations funds and programmes. The working group undertaking this review included representatives of the departments that have a field presence, including the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Political Affairs, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UN-Habitat and the United Nations funds and programmes. The recommendations related to contractual arrangements, designation of family or non-family duty stations, use of the special operations approach, rest and recuperation and other leave provisions, and lump sums for shipping entitlements. These recommendations led to the inclusion of the proposal to modify contractual arrangements and harmonize conditions of service in the Secretary-General's report on investing in the United Nations (A/60/692 and Corr.1). Some related issues were pursued in other arenas.

195. The United Nations continues to participate actively with other organizations of the common system in a comprehensive review of the pay and benefits system being conducted under the auspices of ICSC. The objective of the review is to design a competitive system that will enable organizations to attract, develop and

retain staff of high calibre and to reward staff on the basis of merit, and that will be easier to administer and more transparent. Progress made to date has included the introduction of a streamlined, modernized job classification standard for jobs in the Professional category and a pilot study on broad banding and pay for performance in a small number of volunteer organizations. Details of the review may be found in the reports of ICSC to the General Assembly.

196. The security of United Nations personnel continues to be a major concern. World events have necessitated the continued examination of how the Organization manages the safety and security of its staff. The Office of Human Resources Management plays a key role in the well-being of staff, especially during crisis situations, and works closely with other departments and offices to ensure that human resources issues are taken into account in the planning, preparation and implementation of staff security and safety programmes.

197. New initiatives have been instituted; these include security and safety awareness, and training programmes and guidance for staff and managers on emergency preparedness. The booklet, *Emergency Preparedness*, in English and French, which offers staff and managers guidance on how to prepare for a crisis at both home and work, has been updated and published. Other duty stations have been encouraged to produce similar booklets specific to their locations. Systems to keep staff informed during an emergency situation have been implemented, including the staff information website and hotline, on which staff may find emergency information and updates as to the situation at United Nations Headquarters. These systems have served as prototypes for other duty stations in developing means to communicate with staff during a crisis. A volunteer peer support network known as the SOS Programme was launched by the Office of Human Resources Management in 2004 to help foster a caring work environment, identify and provide support to those in distress or need and in the rapid response to critical incidents and major crises. The programme, in which over 251 staff have received training to date, has proven to be a valuable source of support both in New York and other duty stations.

198. The Secretary-General's report on strengthening of the United Nations gave renewed impetus to the implementation of the United Nations HIV/AIDS Personnel Policy. The Secretariat participated in inter-agency initiatives for staff, including the orientation sessions on HIV/AIDS in the United Nations workplace to provide basic knowledge about HIV/AIDS, to help raise awareness and sensitivity, and help to fight stigma and discrimination. The programme is in line with the Learning Strategy on HIV/AIDS. This inter-agency activity, initiated at Headquarters, served as a model for other duty stations. In addition, the HIV/AIDS hotline continues to provide assistance to staff.

199. The United Nations has participated with other organizations of the common system in preparing and planning for the eventuality of an outbreak of avian flu. In this process, the United Nations must also provide the care of its own staff. United Nations system executive heads, senior managers and United Nations country teams were requested to share pandemic planning and preparedness guidance for the United Nations system. The Guidelines, designed to help managers take measures to protect staff and to ensure continuity of operations, have been prepared through a broad consultative process and take into account the experiences of United Nations country teams. Avian influenza coordinators have been designated at all duty

stations as well as the identification of essential functions, and the establishment of ways in which these functions can best be carried out.

200. Some progress has been made in the complex area of support for spouse employment, which remains a major concern among staff. Spouse support networks have been developed at many duty stations. Focal points for spouse employment have been established at all major duty stations. (For details of activities, see paras. 140-143 above.)

201. Following a pilot project, the Secretariat introduced on 1 February 2003 flexible working arrangements to allow staff to better balance their professional and personal responsibilities. The programme is predicated on the understanding that the interest of the Organization is paramount. Four options are offered to staff: staggered working hours, a compressed work schedule (10 days in 9), scheduled breaks for external learning and telecommuting. Briefing kits and guidelines, including model agreements, were provided to all heads of department. Most departments have introduced at least some of these flexible working arrangements. Many offices and departments have reported a boost in staff morale and work motivation, as well as lower overtime costs and a lower incidence of sick leave among participating staff. Supervisors and managers have commented positively that there has been no decrease in productivity or services rendered. In the implementing offices and departments, success was often identified as correlated with the willingness of both staff members and managers to make the arrangements work, that is, managerial flexibility, modification of work distributions, or a scheduled day off given up voluntarily by staff members at peak work times.

202. To assist staff who are nursing mothers to achieve a better balance between their professional and private lives, and in line with global recommendations issued by the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Health Organization, measures to enable staff members to breastfeed their children on site were introduced in 2003.

3. Future activities

203. Work will continue to ensure that the Organization manages to the best extent possible the safety and security of its staff, together with partners in the common system. The Office of Human Resources Management will continue to play a key role in the well-being of staff, especially during crisis situations, and will continue to work closely with other departments and offices to ensure that human resources issues are taken into account in the planning, preparation and implementation of staff security programmes.

204. The work and life task force in New York, which is led by the Office of Human Resources Management and which includes representatives from United Nations funds and programmes, will continue its work on issues such as support for spouses, childcare facilities, bereavement, elder care and caretaker groups, flexible working arrangements and other improvements in the working environment. The task force will liaise with other duty stations, as appropriate.

205. The United Nations will continue to participate with other organizations of the common system in a comprehensive review of the pay and benefits system being conducted under the auspices of ICSC.

I. Contractual arrangements

1. Goals

206. To adapt contractual arrangements to serve better the operational needs of the Organization while recognizing different types of situations (i.e., stable, continuing work programmes and projects; sudden major surges in the volume and type of work, especially in peacebuilding, peacekeeping and humanitarian operations and including tasks of limited duration; seasonal fluctuations; and short-term requirements) and introducing greater equity for staff.

2. Achievements to date

207. The Secretary-General's proposals for improved, more equitable contractual arrangements that are better suited to the Organization's needs were initially presented in his report on human resources management reform submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session (see A/55/253 and Corr.1, para. 47), following consultations with staff at the Staff-Management Coordination Committee in 2000. After subsequent consultations with staff at the Staff-Management Coordination Committee in 2001 and 2002, detailed proposals on contractual arrangements were set out in an addendum to the Secretary-General's report on human resources management reform submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session (A/59/263/Add.1). The proposals on contractual arrangements were aimed at simplifying the Organization's current contractual arrangements by providing for three types of appointments: short-term (up to six months); fixed-term (up to a maximum of five years); and continuing (open-ended).

208. In section IX of its resolution 59/266, the Assembly took note of the Secretary-General's proposals and decided to revert to the issue at its sixtieth session in the context of its consideration of the report of ICSC on contractual arrangements. The Secretary-General's proposals were consistent with the framework for contractual arrangements presented by ICSC in its annual report for 2005 (see A/60/30, annex IV). The framework proposed by ICSC is currently before the General Assembly.

209. With respect to contractual arrangements in the field, the staffing of field missions was examined in a number of reports starting with the Secretary-General's proposal in 2004 to appoint mission staff in the field under the 100 series when there was a continuing requirement for the functions to be performed (see A/59/291). In its resolution 59/266, the General Assembly requested further information which was provided (see A/59/762 and A/60/698 and Corr.1 and 2). Meanwhile, in its resolutions 59/266, 59/296 and 60/266, the General Assembly suspended for specified periods the application of the four-year maximum limit for appointments of limited duration, authorized reappointment under the 100 series of staff members having reached the four-year limit under the 300 series under specified conditions, and requested the Secretary-General to continue the practice of using 300 series contracts as the primary instrument for the appointment of new mission staff. The entire issue will be considered at the sixty-first session of the General Assembly in the larger context of the Secretary-General's proposal to reform contractual arrangements.

210. Meanwhile, after ICSC considered at its sixty-third session in July 2006 that the Secretary-General's reform proposals would be submitted to the General

Assembly at its sixty-first session, the Commission decided as an interim measure to allow maximum flexibility under the current contractual arrangements for staff in peace operations and to recommend the following measures: (i) to remove the four-year limitation on 300 series appointments; (ii) to permit the conversion to mission-specific contracts for staff members who have a minimum of four years of service, provided that their functions have been reviewed and found necessary and their performance has been confirmed as fully satisfactory; and (iii) to permit the reassignment of mission-specific appointees to another mission in a similar capacity to meet the requirements of the Organization.

3. Future activities

211. In his report (A/60/692 and Corr.1), the Secretary-General articulated a strategy of "an independent international civil service which will once again be known for its high standards of ethics, fairness, transparency and accountability, as well as its culture of continuous learning, high performance and managerial excellence". With a view to implementing this strategy and to realizing his vision of an integrated, field-oriented operational global Secretariat, whose multi-skilled, versatile and mobile staff will be working across disciplines to fulfil the Organization's complex and interrelated mandates, the Secretary-General proposed the introduction of a single United Nations Staff Contract under one set of Staff Rules for the purpose of simplifying contractual arrangements, and of ensuring that they would better support an integrated, global Secretariat.

212. The replacement of the existing three series of Staff Rules with a single series would streamline the contractual framework governing the terms of employment for all United Nations Secretariat staff and promote greater consistency and transparency in the treatment of staff. Under this proposal, appointments of three different types of duration (temporary, fixed-term and continuing) would be possible. These proposals were discussed in 2006 at the Staff-Management Coordination Committee, which supported the Secretary-General's assessment that there was a compelling need for streamlining contractual arrangements. The details of the Secretary-General's proposals are elaborated in the Secretary-General's report on investing in people (A/61/255).

J. Administration of justice

213. The administration of justice is an essential element of the Secretary-General's reform, which is the subject of a separate report of the Secretary-General. The Redesign Panel, which was established by the General Assembly in resolution 59/283 of 13 April 2005 to propose a model for a new system for resolving staff grievances in the United Nations, transmitted its report to the Secretary-General in July 2006. A special session of the Staff-Management Coordination Committee in January 2007 will consider the Panel's recommendations prior to the submission of the Secretary-General's comments on these recommendations at the first part of the resumed sixty-first session in March 2007, as requested in resolution 59/283.

V. Conclusion

214. **The Secretary-General invites the General Assembly to take note of achievements to date to implement the human resources management reform programme and planned future activities described in the present report.**

215. **The Secretary-General also invites the General Assembly to reconsider the policy requiring staff members to renounce permanent resident status in a country other than the country of their nationality before recruitment, for the reasons explained in annex I to the present report.**

216. **The Secretary-General draws the attention of the General Assembly to his report on investing in people (A/61/255), in particular to section XIII, regarding the need for further investment in order to successfully carry forward human resources management reform in the Organization.**

Annex

Permanent resident status

A. Request by the General Assembly

1. In section III, paragraph 1, of resolution 60/238 the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session on the practice of United Nations staff members having to renounce permanent resident status in a country outside the country of their nationality, including cases where staff members have been exceptionally authorized to retain permanent resident status in accordance with section 5.7 of the administrative instruction entitled "Visa status of non-United States staff members serving in the United States, members of their household and their household employees, and staff members seeking or holding permanent resident status in the United States" (ST/AI/2000/19 of 18 December 2000), and the criteria used in making such exceptions.

B. Background

2. The requirement to renounce permanent resident status stems from a long-standing policy articulated by the General Assembly in 1953. In December of that year, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions recommended that "persons in permanent resident status should in future be ineligible for appointment as internationally recruited staff members unless they are prepared to change to a G-4 visa status (or equivalent status in host countries other than the United States of America)" (A/2581, para. 10). The Fifth Committee subsequently confirmed the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, noting that the "view was widely shared that international officials should be true representatives of the culture and personality of the country of which they were nationals, and that those who elected to break their ties with that country could no longer claim to fulfil the conditions governing employment in the United Nations" (A/2615, paras. 69 and 70). A number of delegations also raised objections to "any extension of the policy of national income tax reimbursement to a further group of staff members" (ibid., para. 67).

3. In January 1954, the Secretary-General informed staff members of the conclusions of the General Assembly regarding the issue of permanent resident status, including its decision that the Secretary-General may grant permission to an internationally recruited staff member to change his status and reimburse taxes only in "exceptional and compelling circumstances" (ST/AFS/SER.A/238, para. 6). The Staff Rules were amended to provide that staff members who acquired permanent resident status in the country of their duty station would no longer be eligible for certain international benefits,[a] and to require staff members intending to acquire permanent resident status or change their nationality to notify the Secretary-General before such change become final.[b]

[a] Staff rule 104.7, as promulgated in Secretary-General's Bulletin ST/AFS/SGB/94/Rev.2 of 19 January 1954.

[b] Staff rule 104.4 (c), as promulgated by ST/SGB/94/Amend.1 of 8 March 1954.

4. Over the years, the requirement to renounce permanent resident status prior to recruitment for service on a 100 series appointment of more than one year has been consistently applied, with limited exemptions, and has been upheld by the Administrative Tribunal.[c] The requirement has been understood by the Secretariat to apply to all internationally recruited staff members irrespective of whether the permanent resident status to be renounced is in the country of the duty station or elsewhere.

5. The most recent administrative issuance setting out the requirement is ST/AI/2000/19.[d] Section 5.7 of ST/AI/2000/19 specifies the following limited exemptions from the requirement to renounce permanent resident status in a country other than the country of nationality for:

(a) Stateless persons;

(b) Newly appointed staff members who have applied for citizenship by naturalization, when such citizenship will be granted imminently;

(c) General Service and related categories staff previously authorized to retain permanent resident status, on promotion to the Professional category;

(d) Staff members in the General Service and related categories;

(e) Staff members appointed to serve outside the United States either under the 200 series of the Staff Rules as technical assistance project personnel, or under an appointment of limited duration governed by the 300 series of the Staff Rules;

(f) Staff members appointed for less than one year; however if their appointments are extended beyond one year, that extension is subject to obtaining a G-4 visa.

6. These exemptions are used when the specific situation addressed for each type of exemption exists, for example, when the person is stateless, belongs to the General Service category, serves outside the United States under a 200 or 300 series appointment or has an appointment of less than one year.

C. Implications of maintaining permanent resident status outside of country of nationality

7. The policy of requiring staff members to renounce their permanent resident status in countries outside of their country of nationality was adopted to address concerns relating to geographical distribution or financial implications.

Geographical distribution

8. The Secretary-General has noted in 1953 that, if staff members elect to become permanent residents of another country, there may be an implication of an intention not to maintain ties with the country of their nationality (A/2533, para. 117). At the time, there were 3,356 staff members at Headquarters, of whom

[c] See Judgement No. 326, *Fischman* (1984) and Judgement No. 819, *Moawad* (1997).

[d] ST/AI/2000/19 was preceded by ST/AI/294 ("Visa status of non-United States staff members serving in the United States") of 16 August 1982, which superseded ST/ADM/SER.A/538 of 5 May 1959 and ST/AFS/SER.A/238.

461 had permanent resident status; among these, 231 were entitled to benefits associated with international recruitment (ibid., para. 114). The following year, the Secretary-General noted that the number of internationally recruited staff members in permanent resident status at Headquarters has so diminished that it does not significantly affect the geographical balance of the staff (A/2777, para. 14).

9. As at 30 June 2006, of the 5,856 staff members of the Secretariat serving in New York, 456 have been authorized to acquire or retain United States permanent resident status, 58 of whom were in the Professional category and above and 398 in the General Service and related categories. While it is not possible to project how these numbers would change if the restrictions on the acquisition or retention of permanent resident status were lifted, it should be noted that the number of requests from internationally recruited staff members to establish or retain United States permanent resident status is relatively low.[e] Moreover, there is a significant disincentive for international staff to acquire or retain permanent resident status in the country of their duty station as this entails loss of entitlement to expatriate benefits such as education grant and home leave.

10. Since staff members holding permanent resident status are listed by the United Nations under the country of their recognized nationality, the acquisition or retention of permanent resident status would not affect the current calculations of geographical distribution.

Financial implications

11. In 2005, the United Nations reimbursed income taxes paid by staff members who were either nationals or permanent residents of Eritrea, Turkey and the United States. Reimbursements for income taxes levied by the United States accounted for more than 99 per cent of the total amount of income tax reimbursements made by the United Nations.

12. Allowing staff members to maintain permanent resident status outside the country of nationality will have financial implications for income tax reimbursements and staff assessment. As explained in a 1994 report of the Secretary-General on staff assessment and the Tax Equalization Fund (A/48/932):

> (a) ... [A]ll revenues from staff assessment levied on the gross salaries of staff paid from the United Nations regular budget are credited to the Tax Equalization Fund. Such amounts are recorded in sub-accounts of the Fund in the name of each Member State in the proportion of its contribution to the budget. In response to a recommendation by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/32/386, para. 14), comparable provisions were established for staff paid from assessed peace-keeping operations by the General Assembly in its resolutions 33/13 C of 8 December and 33/14 of 3 November 1978.
>
> (b) When a staff member financed from the regular budget or from an assessed peace-keeping operation is required to pay income taxes imposed by a Member State on his or her United Nations income, the reimbursement made by the United Nations to that staff member is charged against the credit, in the

[e] During the period 2001-2005, a total of 24 staff members were requested to renounce their permanent resident status before their recruitment to the Secretariat.

Tax Equalization Fund, of the Member State that levied the taxes. In resolution 1099 (XI) of 27 February 1957, the General Assembly decided that the same system would be applied to local and state income taxes.

13. In the revised edition of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations promulgated in ST/SGB/2003/7, financial regulations 4.11 and 4.12 specify that if the amount required for income tax reimbursement is less than the credits of a Member State in its respective sub-account of the Tax Equalization Fund, the balance of such credits is to be offset against the contributions due from the Member State. On the other hand, if the total of such reimbursements exceeds the credits of a Member State in the Tax Equalization Fund, the shortfall shall be added to and recovered from assessed contributions due from that Member State in the subsequent financial period.[f]

14. With respect to staff members who are paid from non-assessed funds (such as trust funds and most special account funds), it should be noted that such funds do not participate in the Tax Equalization Fund. Accordingly, should there be an increase in the number of staff members retaining permanent resident status, thereby increasing the amount of income tax reimbursements paid by the Organization, those increased payments would have to be charged against the specific fund, thereby decreasing the resources available for programme implementation.

15. Finally, where staff members seek to acquire or maintain permanent resident status outside of their current duty station, the income earned outside of the country of permanent resident status may be fully or partially exempt from taxation by that country if the tax laws permit the full or limited exclusion of foreign-earned income. In such cases, the abolition of the requirement to renounce permanent resident status would have more limited financial implications for the Organization.

D. Review of requirement to renounce permanent resident status

16. The Secretary-General would welcome a reconsideration by the General Assembly of the requirement for Professional staff to renounce permanent resident status, taking into account the individual hardship that may result from the application of the requirement and the changes in the needs of the Organization and the profile of its staff. At the time that the policy was first discussed in 1953, most staff were given appointments with an expectation of long-term employment at the same duty station. Both of those elements have dramatically changed.

17. There is a much higher number of staff on fixed-term appointments than was the case in 1953. That calls into question the fairness of requiring a candidate to give up permanent residence status, which has important long-term consequences, as a prerequisite for accepting a fixed-term appointment, which normally carries no expectation of renewal.

18. Mobility across duty stations has become as an essential part of the conditions of employment with the United Nations. The requirement to renounce permanent resident status creates major obstacles for mobility and for staff members who were covered by the exemption applicable to staff serving outside the United States under the 200 or 300 series and lose the benefit of that exemption when reappointed under

[f] These provisions replaced financial rules 105.2 to 105.5 cited in A/48/932.

the 100 series. Moreover, broadening of the possibility for staff members to acquire or retain permanent resident status would provide a more secure basis for their families to remain in that country while the staff member is required to serve in another duty station or field operation.

19. Changes in patterns of marriage over the last half century are also relevant. Since 1953, there has been a growing number of staff members with spouses from a country other than their own, which often gives them the right to become permanent residents in the country of the spouse; permanent resident status would therefore be important for establishing and maintaining family ties. Permanent resident status may also be a prerequisite for exercising other rights necessary for establishing a common household, such as buying property.

20. It is recognized that the requirement to renounce permanent resident status was initially introduced to ensure that international officials should be true representatives of the culture and personality of the country of which they were nationals. At the same time, the Staff Rules have always permitted staff to retain nationality in more than one country, the Secretary-General being given the authority to determine the country with which the staff member is more closely associated, and whose nationality will be recognized by the Organization. Such a different treatment for two situations which appear closely related raises an issue of fairness.

21. The General Assembly may wish to reconsider the requirement to renounce permanent resident status as it applies to all internationally recruited staff members or, at minimum, as it applies to those internationally recruited staff members seeking to establish or maintain permanent residence in a country outside of their current duty station. The current practice of allowing locally recruited staff members to maintain permanent resident status would remain unchanged.

22. Should the General Assembly decide that, taking into account the considerations set out above, internationally recruited staff members should no longer be required to renounce permanent resident status prior to recruitment, the Secretariat would ensure that staff rule 104.7 (c), which provides the basis to discontinue international benefits for staff members who become permanent residents in the country of their duty station, would continue to be strictly enforced.